LILITH

THE INDEPENDENT JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE VOL. 18, NO. 2 $4.00

OUT OF AFRICA:
An Ethiopian Jewish Woman's Exodus

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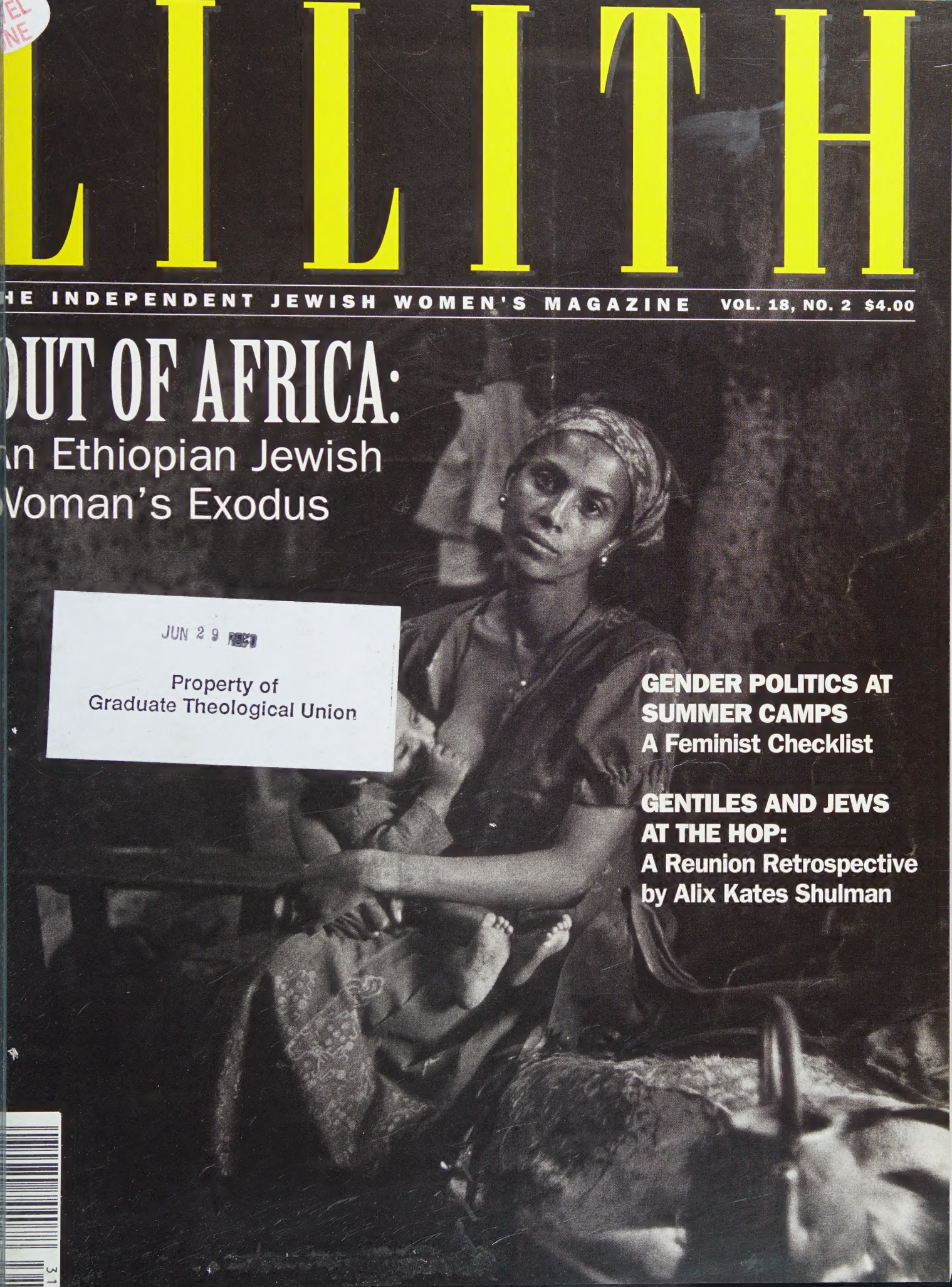

GENDER POLITICS AT SUMMER CAMPS
A Feminist Checklist

GENTILES AND JEWS AT THE HOP:
A Reunion Retrospective
by Alix Kates Shulman

LILITH, the nation's independent non-profit Jewish women's quarterly, has—since 1976—set the agenda of Jewish women's issues across the spectrum of Jewish identification, political views and generations:

- publishing Jewish women's writing from the former Soviet Union, Latin America and Israel
- combatting negative steroeotyping—JAP baiting and more
- calling attention to domestic violence in the Jewish community
- taking a new look at Jewish women's philanthropy
- showcasing new women's rituals and celebrations

Now, we are pleased to launch:

LILITH'S NATIONAL JEWISH WOMEN'S TALENT BANK & INFORMATION SERVICE

With major funding from the Nathan Cummings Foundation, LILITH is collecting information for a clearinghouse so that the expertise and talents of Jewish women can be made available to programmers in the Jewish community and to the national media. As Cynthia Ozick noted in a groundbreaking LILITH article, to speak of Jewish genius without recognizing the women is to speak only of the Jewish "half-genius." The LILITH Talent Bank will include women with expertise in these fields, among others:

AIDS	Science	Holocaust Studies	Banking
Breast Cancer	Visual Arts	Human Rights	Finance
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Are women featured as speakers in your community? Are women quoted in the press when a journalist needs a Jewish expert? Often programmers, journalists and TV producers want to feature Jewish women, but don't know where to find them. If you have a role in planning community programs or if you work with the media, call Naomi Danis at LILITH's Talent Bank, (212) 757-0818 or FAX (212) 757-0818.

TO DEPOSIT YOUR CV IN THE LILITH TALENT BANK,
WATCH FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF LILITH, SUMMER 1993 (VOL.#18, #3),
FOR A QUESTIONNAIRE SEEKING INFORMATION ON JEWISH WOMEN EXPERTS.

LILITH

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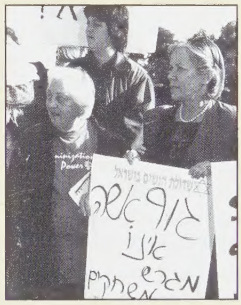

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Cover photograph: Joan Roth

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LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: ***"After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Lilith said: "We are equal because we both come from the earth . . .'"*** **(From *The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b*)**

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FROM THE EDITOR

This issue is about journeys—physical and metaphorical. Sociologists and social workers have begun to explore the stresses that Ethiopian Jewish women endure in adjusting to late-twentieth-century life, as well as the gender conflicts they experience when traditional patriarchy confronts a more egalitarian Israeli lifestyle. But the path these refugees take in escaping from Ethiopia—where, says our author, "Jews are witches"—has been somewhat shrouded in mystery, in part because of the secrecy surrounding the airlifts Israel organized to rescue the thousands of Ethiopian Jews who came out of Africa in the mid-1980's.

In this issue of LILITH, Kessaye Tevajieh, a high school graduate who had wanted to become a chemistry teacher, tells of her escape on foot, pregnant, through the deserts of the Sudan, then to Germany, and finally to *Eretz Yisrael*—"a modern-day exodus," she calls it.

Other journeys in this issue are more familiar. The trek to camp (as camper, staffer or visiting parent) is a familiar rite of passage. Ever thought about the gender messages that the camp experience transmits? In some Jewish camps—at least in the past—the guys played basketball as the girls sat in the bleachers crocheting *kippot* for them. Read here about how an infusion of feminist programming can expand the consciousness of college-age counselors and their campers—both male and female.

Also in this issue is a moving exploration of the path taken by a woman separating from her husband of nineteen years. *Her* journey is eased by her peers—the women of her *Rosh Hodesh* group, who support her in a very concrete way by creating a Jewish ritual to ease her passage through that liminal state between being married and having a "new" life.

And now, dear readers, a note about another kind of journey—the walk to your photocopying machines that so many of you have taken in the past few weeks. At the same time that the article on Jewish women's philanthropy from LILITH's previous issue [Winter 1993] was receiving wide coverage in the press, it came to our attention that LILITH's loyal readers,

Illustration by Karen Stolper

excited by the article's fresh look at how Jewish women give away their money, were making numerous copies of the piece and circulating it among friends, professional colleagues, leaders of Jewish organizations, board members and fundraisers.

I'm very excited about the impact the article is already having, with calls coming in to the LILITH office asking our advice about conferences and consultations on Jewish women's philanthropy. But we would prefer that LILITH's admirers please—puhleeeeeze—first ask our office for permission to reprint before dashing over to the photocopier. You benefit the magazine in several ways when you inform the office of your interest.

First, of course, you respect Lilith's copyrighted material.

Then, and no small second: we are able to report back to our donors and foundation supporters, whose financial contributions make the magazine's publication possible, that LILITH articles reach out to readers even beyond our subscription list.

Third: we, LILITH's small but devoted editorial staff, want your feedback so that we can determine which articles in an issue elicit the most interest from our readers.

Fourth, and very important: when we give permission to reprint an article, we also ask you to attach a great-looking, informative new LILITH subscription brochure (which we'll rush out to you) to each copy of the article you duplicate. This helps LILITH reach out to new subscribers with the very best selling tool we have—an article from the magazine itself, recommended by someone who already reads LILITH: you. If you don't contact us before reprinting an article, LILITH loses the chance to have its work adequately credited, and your friends and colleagues miss the chance to subscribe for themselves—and get other unusual, upcoming articles, including the second installment of the philanthropy series, due out in August.

So please help—**Call the LILITH office (212) 757-0818 or fax us at (212) 757-5705 to ask for permission reprint this or any of our articles!** I look forward to hearing from you.

Susan Weidman Schneider

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LETTERS

SURVIVING INCEST

I want to thank LILITH for the articles on incest in Holocaust families [Winter '93]. I was interested in the writer's feeling that her father's abuse may have been a result of his victimization by the Nazis. Wouldn't it be helpful to try and find out if he had been sexually abused *before* the Holocaust, perhaps by a family member? We can only wonder at the terrible legacy left to the Jewish family by pogroms, etc.

DIANE TRACHTENBERG
Huntingdon Valley, PA

Lilith Goldberg's article "Surviving Incest in a Holocaust Family" is the most horrendous incest story imaginable. The male protagonist's behavior deserves no excuse whatsoever. He obviously *always* was and will be *pure trash*, along with his wife, the mother, who evidently was a silent observer.

SHE should have killed the beast.

I regret that you saw fit to publish this article. It sullies the reputation of honorable survivors who built exemplary lives "against all odds."

RENEE L. BRANDEIS
Scarsdale, NY

INHERITING FUR COATS

Another perspective should be added to "Inheriting Fur" [Winter '93], and I have my mother, Sybil, to thank for it. She donated her fur to an animal-rights advocacy group, a decision that made me the beneficiary of clear thinking and compassion. Remembering what my mother did, and why, keeps me warm in the winter *and* free of the "complicated feelings" that accompany those coats in the closet!

SHERI MEISEL
Rockville, MD

The subtitle to your article "Inheriting Fur: Nostalgia *vs.* Politics" led me to expect an intelligent debate on the issue. I was very disappointed and very angry at the attention given to the "Nostalgia" end of the issue, which was covered *ad nauseum* to the total exclusion of any of the conscientious reasons people feel as I do.

One quote from your introduction screams a lack of sensitivity and a real denseness on the issue: "it is unclear that fur is any worse than leather. . . . " Leather is a by-product of a food source. The day we stop eating meat will be the day I stop wearing leather.

ELISSA D. TIMONER
Coconut Grove, FL

SEX TOYS

As someone who enjoys both LILITH and Good Vibrations, the sex toy shop in San Francisco, I was happy to see an ad for it in your magazine [Summer '92]. I can vouch for Good Vibrations' being a feminist store, catering largely to women, in a clean, safe environment. In response to your reader who protested the ad, saying LILITH is "aimed at raising the intellectual and spiritual consciousness of Jewish women," I'd like to ask: When does any kind of ad raise consciousness? Ads are there to publicize a product or service, and for the journal to make money. I have no problem with a feminist journal selling space to a feminist store. Also, before you criticize, you should go to Good Vibrations, or get their catalog (which includes books and videos). You may find it to be, as I did, a very enlightening, and yes, spiritual experience!

ANN ABRAMS
Brookline, MA

WOMEN PHILANTHROPISTS

There are some powerful insights and observations in Susan Weidman Schneider's article on "Jewish Women's Philanthropy" [Winter '93].

What bothers me, however, is the expectation that the *brunt* of the responsibility for increasing fundraising among women lies with the fundraising organizations. Out of the "10 steps into the future of Jewish women's philanthropy" nine are directed at organizations, one at women themselves. I find that ultimately demeaning.

When we are adamant in declaring that women's brains are not so different from men's that they can't learn and teach

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Feminine Soul

the Motherline

Every Woman's Journey to Find Her Female Roots

Naomi Ruth Lowinsky, Ph.D.

formerly titled *Stories from the Motherline*

Motherline (n):

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WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Nestled in the heart of upstate New York, in a small town called Seneca Falls, stands the Women's Hall of Fame. Women's history buffs will recall the historical significance of Seneca Falls, which hosted the 1848 Women's Rights Convention, attended by, among others, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Their faces are among the 47 women honored in the halls with photographs, archival letters, and biographical information. The Women's Hall of Fame was created "to honor in perpetuity these women, citizens of the United States of America, whose contributions to the arts, athletics, business, education, government, the humanities, philanthropy and science have been the greatest value for the development of their country."

When LILITH Board Member Yvette Gralla called to tell us about her recent trip to the Women's Hall of Fame, I was reminded of my own visit, a few years ago. Walking along the corridor of the Hall, I was greeted by posters of the honored women's faces, intended to invoke a sense of respect and awe for these accomplished women. However, it took only a few moments for me to become aware of the absences. The Hall's declaration of Seneca Falls as "the birthplace of women's rights" gave me a clear indication of the Hall's perspective; the experience of many minority and disempowered populations were under-represented, or not represented at all, including Jewish-American women, Latina-American women, Asian-American women, Native American women, and lesbians.

Here is your chance to correct this bias: The women honored in the Hall are chosen by a National Honors Committee, consisting of the heads of national women's organizations, such as the League of Women's Voters. These select women choose from a list of nominated women. But anyone is eligible to nominate a candidate simply by filling out a nomination form. In a telephone interview, the director, Sue Lowell Butler, warned me, "Don't try and nominate your mother—it won't work."

Daniel Mordzinski

Heidi Gralla and Yvette Gralla

When I asked Butler about the absence of Jewish women, she said, "There are Jewish women. We just don't put little Jewish stars by their names." Closer examination reveals just one Jewish woman in The Women's Hall of Fame, Gertrude Belle Elion, a Jewish woman scientist. The Women's Hall of Fame stands to honor notable women, and we have the power to make sure that Jewish and other women are not excluded—the same power we have with other historical projects such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Lesbian Herstory Archives, or the Wiesenthal Beit Hashoah Museum of Tolerance.

So maybe my mother won't appear in The Women's Hall of Fame, but this year I'm nominating Emma Goldman. I'm hoping that the next time I visit Seneca Falls, she'll be waiting for me.

—H.L.

For more information or to receive a nomination form for the Women's Hall of Fame: National Women's Hall of Fame, 76 Fall Street, Seneca Falls, NY 13148 (315) 568-3334.

A JEWISH FEMINIST CONTRIBUTION TO MULTICULTURALISM

Lesléa Newman, whose story "A Letter to Harvey Milk" appeared in LILITH's Fall 1988 issue, has recently received considerable attention for her children's stories, noteworthy–independently–for their lesbian and Jewish contents.

Newman is the author of *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Alyson Publications,1989) a children's story about a lesbian family which appeared on the original list of resources in the controversial Rainbow Curriculum of New York City's public schools in Fall 1992. The curriculum was both attacked and promoted for including books such as *Heather Has Two Mommies*, which depict "alternative"—specifically, gay and lesbian—family structures.

Newman's story "Remember That" was selected as a winner of the *Highlights for Children* annual fiction contest for stories focusing on ethnic cultures within the United States. It is significant that *Highlights*, a mainstream children's magazine with a circulation of almost 3 million, strewn across thousands of pediatricians' offices, will feature a story both with Jewish content and authored by an "out" lesbian writer. The story depicts the affectionate relationship between a young Jewish girl and her grandmother, "Bubbe," and the passing of ethical and spiritual values from the older woman to the child.

In addition, Newman's children's book *Belinda's Bouquet* (Alyson Publications, 1991), focuses on a young girl's learning to accept her body size in the face of pressures to diet. Newman's other works include short stories, poetry, a novel, and nonfiction focusing on women's relationships with food and their bodies.

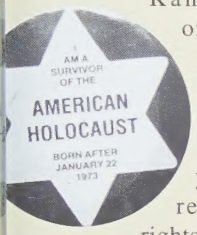
Lesléa Newman presents authentic and joyful portraits of children living in subcultural America, stories which teach tolerance and sensitivity. With an ability to charm a variety of audiences, Newman teaches by example that it *is* possible to pass safely between communities, as a Jewish woman and a lesbian, and to write openly and honestly about both worlds.

—Hadar Dubowsky

Anti-Choice, Anti-Jew

While many women celebrated January 22nd, 1993, as the twentieth anniversary of Roe *v.* Wade, the Supreme Court decision protecting a woman's right to abortion, others, in a horrifying and dangerous manipulation, labeled the date as the beginning of the "American Holocaust."

As part of an inflammatory anti-choice propaganda campaign, a Kansas-based organization produced this pin, implying that twenty years of reproductive rights for women in the United States is comparable to the Nazi Holocaust.



—H.D.

A New Spin on an Old Tradition: Bringing in the Bride

The idea to fete Rachel on the eve of her wedding was not a radical one, because for many centuries Jews have celebrated *hachnasat kallah* or "bringing in the bride" to the wedding canopy. In fact, there is a rabbinic commandment to provide a dowry for brides and to rejoice at their wedding, and it is customary to dance before the bride and to praise her, which we did, adding our own style. Via phone, correspondence and with many additions, deletions and corrections, we created our "Bringing in the Bride" event.

Several hours before the *chuppah* we, Rachel's mother, sisters and sister-in-law, gathered in the living room to read, sing, recite, tell stories and play guitar for the bride. Rachel sat on the "bride's chair," looking serene, anticipatory and beautiful in her simple white dress. The groom's mother read from a book of poetry by Rahel (Bluestein) of Kibbutz Deganyah. "For her blood runs in my blood," she began. Her sister-in-law read Marge Piercy's poem "For Strong Women," and I, her mother, talked about Rachel's namesake, Bobba Rashel. After *pogromniks* had captured her husband, Bobba Rashel traveled from town to town until she had gathered enough money for the ransom. After telling the story I presented to Rachel a gold bracelet, the engagement gift Ephraim Pincus had given Bobba Rashel in Poland, 1889.

The men in our family, invited to watch the ceremony, sniffled in the background. An army friend saluted Rachel in beautiful prose, and Rachel read one of her own poems. For the closing act her sister planned a guitar solo. The string broke, but never mind; it was 6:30, and the rabbi and guests were waiting for the wedding procession to appear.

—Toby Ticktin Back

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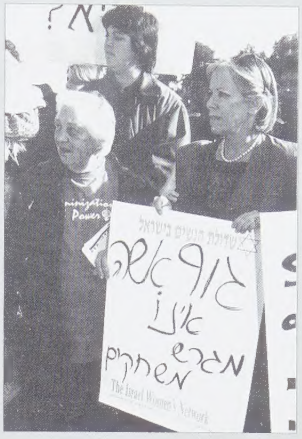
Rape on Kibbutz

Tamar Gozansky, a Hadash party member of the Israeli Knesset [Parliament], has sent LILITH the following communique:



A fourteen-year-old girl was gang raped and sexually abused for an entire week by eleven boys, aged sixteen and older, on Kibbutz Shomrat in Israel, in the summer of 1988. The girl complained to the police, but a year later the District Court Prosecutor decided to close the file of the complainant "for lack of public interest" and for the inability of the girl to testify in court because of her mental condition.

The decision led to public fury. Leading the battle to reopen the file are "Bat-Adam"–a coalition of women's groups fighting against violence against women–and public figures like myself.

The battle achieved results; the prosecutor for the Haifa District Court has entered an action against seven of the accused. (One had fled the country.) The trial began in June 1991, lasted for more than a year. The rape victim, today 19, has undergone a humiliating cross-examination by the five lawyers defending the accused men. In November 1992 the judge decided to acquit them on the grounds of "benefit of the doubt" based on the discrepancies and contradictions of the victim's testimony.

This time, the decision aroused not only women's organizations but also many others in Israel, including Knesset members. Consequently, the State Prosecutor studied the verdict and has filed an appeal to the Supreme Court. A decision has still not been published.

The following is excerpted from a statement made by Tamar Gozansky to The Jerusalem Post, *November 12, 1992:*

I greatly fear that the Shomrat verdict will inhibit girls and women who hesitate to complain to the police, thus seriously harming efforts by women's groups to create an atmosphere that encourages them to file complaints in cases of rape and sexual assault.

I fear the verdict will strengthen the distorted concept according to which the rape victim (of whatever age) collaborated with the rapist(s) because she did not scream, cry or complain right away to the police.

I condemn any crude denunciation of, and threat toward, the judge; but I regard as encouraging the growing readiness of women and the public at large to struggle against a distorted social concept which perceives the body of a girl or a woman as a vehicle for satisfying lust, which "understands" the "lack of restraint" of men.

Such concepts form the background of the acquittal of the Shomrat defendants, "for lack of proof," as well as that of the ludicrous sentences imposed on sexual attackers in other cases.

The first demand, in the wake of the trial, is that the State Prosecutor lodge an appeal against the District Court judgement. But this is not enough. We need amendments to the criminal law relating to the collection of evidence from and submission of testimony by the raped person; we need severer sentences for gang rape and the rape of minors, and their abuse.

But, chiefly, a true concern turnabout is needed in the very concept, so that we rid ourselves of rapists and sexual attackers of women, physical or emotional. Israeli society must eliminate the cluster of prejudices vis-a-vis women—and that is a mission the educational system and the media must adopt with all their strength.

While there has been much publicity about the adjustment problems and gender issues of Ethiopian immigrants to Israel, little is known about their perilous journeys.

"The avot *[elders] had always said that one day we would return to* Eretz Yisrael. *And so it happened. Not all the Jews are here yet, but someday that will happen."*

OUT OF AFRICA

Kessaye Tells Her Tale— A Jewish Woman's Modern-Day Exodus

Kessaye Tevajieh is a thirty-year-old Ethiopian woman who in 1984 walked from her home in Addis Ababa to the Sudan, with her husband, Addis, to begin their journey to Israel (they were eventually airlifted in "Operation Moses"). Tall and slender, with fine features, she holds herself like an aristocrat, proud of the fact that she had finished high school and was headed for a degree in chemistry when she decided to risk the dangerous journey to Israel. "Before I was born," Kessaye told me, "my mother had two miscarriages and then I came. Like a gift from God. So they called me 'Kessaye,' which means 'gift from God'."

I met Kessaye in October, 1992, in Be'ersheva, Israel. A community worker who teaches, counsels, and mentors recent Ethiopian immigrants, she was working at the agency where I volunteered as a social worker during my sabbatical year in Israel.

For several months, Kessaye and I drove to work together (half an hour each way), conversing in the car; we conducted two or three one-hour home visits together in the immigrant absorption center, and we visited each other's homes on our day off. Finally, when I felt I knew Kessaye well enough, I asked her to tell me the story of how she came to Israel.

We took advantage of a slow day at work in early spring, and drove to a nearby orange orchard. Sitting in the car, the windows open, I turned on my tape recorder and asked her one question: "How did you make the decision to leave Ethiopia?" From her answer flowed the entire story of her journey.

—Penina V. Adelman

Photographs of Ethiopian Jewish women in Ethiopia by Joan Roth.

[The following story is Penina Adelman's translation from Kessaye Tevajieh's Hebrew. Supplemental information has been inserted in brackets, and Penina's comments are italicized.]

To Go or Not to Go

Deciding to leave was very difficult, truly very difficult. Especially since I had to leave my parents in order to go out on the road [Kessaye was 21 at the time].

But things were getting worse. Every day [in Addis Ababa] you would see people with their donkeys or on horseback. Our street was all Jews and they were all leaving. All day long and all night long too you would see people taking all their things and leaving. It was truly sad.

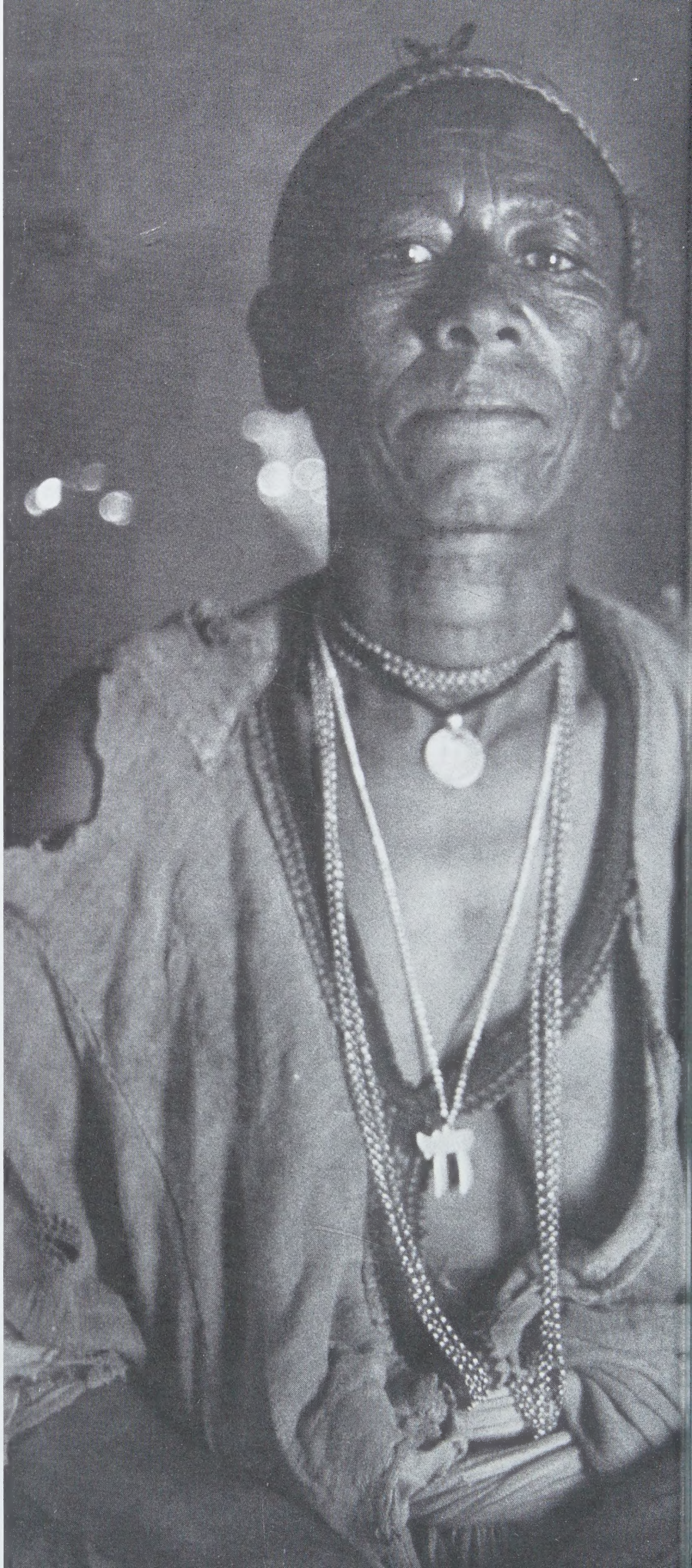
You would see houses destroyed by the non-Jews. People were already living off the gardens that had belonged to my relatives. People took all the things that were left behind. Money. Things. I'm telling you, it was really like a war.

I had already heard that most of the family on one side, on my mother's side, really close relatives. . . had died on the road. This was really hard, to hear this and to think about leaving my family. Still, in spite of all this I finally made the decision to go.

How could I stay with my parents? My husband and I could not make a living there. There was absolutely nothing for me to do there [Kessaye had already finished school]. So we said, "We'll go and see what will be." Zionism also played a part.

And then my husband said, "Look, we don't have children yet. We might as well go."

At the time, Kessaye was living in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, with her parents, her brothers and sisters, their spouses, and her grandmother. Because Kessaye's grandmother was a wealthy woman, they were able to move to the capital from their village in Gondar province, enabling Kessaye to attend high school. (The village had no such school.) During the family's stay in Addis Ababa, the atmosphere in the city grew increasingly violent. Jews had often been targeted during times of unrest in Ethiopia and some of Kessaye's high school friends got in trouble with the regime in power because of their involvement in anti-government demonstrations. Some were tortured, others imprisoned. Kessaye described how she "passed as a Christian" by removing the Jewish star pendant from around her neck. Like many Jews in urban settings, she relied on this practice during most of her life in the city.



The Trek

So that was it. After that we started on the road. We didn't have any family to help us and it was very hard. Everyone was going with groups of family and friends. I went alone—with my husband, of course. But there was no one else I knew.

When we had already been walking for two days, the guides we had hired took us to their house. There they told us, "You are only two people. From you we will not receive enough money. We need at least one hundred people, so you have to wait here." We waited a month and two more weeks. That wait was the hardest time of my life so far. They didn't give us any food, and I was pregnant in my fourth month with Aliza. They didn't give us anything to drink because they knew we were Jewish. Ethiopians believe that Jews are witches, that they possess the evil eye, that they can ruin crops just by looking at them or walking by a field.

My husband would get up early and go out all day to look for work. If he found anything, he worked until late at night like a donkey. All day long I would cry. What can I tell you? No one from my family knew where I had gone, if I had met my end in the Sudan or not. . . .

There was nobody to take care of me. There was no place to sleep. I cried all night long. I was lying on the floor in the mud. I was already suffering from pains in my feet, it was so cold. Even so, with all the problems, there was no way we were going to go back. "No," I told him, "I'm not going back. I can die on the road but I'm not going back." My husband said, "Come on, let's go back home." I said, "No. I can't go back anymore. End of story. . . . " It was the hardest decision I ever made in my life—to leave that place and go on.

About a week later we left. I never could really see the young men who were our guides; they were always way ahead. You know, there are all kinds of things on the road. Lions. High mountains which you have to go up and then come down. And then you have to go up again. There are wide places where you have to jump across. What can I tell you? It was very hard. I hardly knew what I was doing or where I was going after a while. I was like somebody dead, only I was moving.

A Pleasant Surprise

When there was only a day and a half left to our journey, we met up with a hundred or so people. They were Jews. When I found them, I said, "*Todah la'El* [thank God]" because I wasn't dead.

After a day and a half, we arrived in Sudan. When we arrived, we had absolutely nothing—no money, nothing. They packed us into the lorry. Children were riding on top of grownups. We were packed in very tight. It was still nighttime when we arrived. The first lorry had broken down because there were so many people on it.

"No," I told him, "I'm not going back. I can die on the road but I'm not going back."

Inside

We finally reached the transit camp [one of many established by international relief organizations to accomodate the many Ethiopian refugees—both non-Jewish and Jewish—fleeing famine and political unrest, streaming into the Sudan], and what can I tell you? It's shocking, people so thin, sick. There were people I hadn't seen in two or three months and I found them—how can this be? —looking as if they had had nothing to eat in all that time. I recognized them. They were from my own family but what can I tell you? They were eating—I can't even describe it. There were flies everywhere. There's a smell coming from it, impossible to eat. There's spoiled milk.

I had to get along without any sheets or blankets. I slept on the floor. You don't even have anything to put underneath you when you sleep. So I used to take off my clothes and put them under me. There was heat that, I don't know, what can I tell you, that kind of heat. Sudan has the most severe climate possible. In the middle of rain, you have burning hot sun and wind. Often when you eat, you get sand in your mouth that the wind has blown in."

Between 1983 and 1984, it is estimated that several thousand people died in Sudanese transit camps due to malnutrition, dehydration, and such illnesses as dysentery, malaria, and typhoid. According to survivors of these camps, Jews were treated especially badly by the authorities and by other refugees. The Sudan is, after all, an Arab country. Anti-Semitism was rampant. Thieves colluding with the camp officials would routinely rob Jews of their meager supplies.

Burials

When I woke up in the morning, I found that many had died in the night. Five maybe. Then a few hours later, they're burying more. At this point I thought, "*Toda la'El* that my parents did not come with me. People are dying here everyday."

I went to bury someone who was a relative of my family. When I came to the burial place, I said, "How can this be? Every second there's someone else dying here." We sat and sat and sat at the funeral and on that day, twenty-one people were buried. In fact, that day we buried four people I had known before. When I came back home that day, I said to my husband, "That's it. Whoever dies, dies. I'm not going to bury any more people while I'm here. It's enough. I can't do it."

There weren't any stones, not even sand to place on the bodies. They prayed and said things, but it didn't help. It just didn't help.

There was no food, no this, no that. Whoever had money would buy some food. Even water to wash with. Sometimes you'd have to stand a whole day in line just to get some water to wash with. Who had the strength to do such a thing?

Problems began in the camp. Dysentery. I was sick with it. Then after the dysentery, I became anemic. I had such bad headaches I could not get up. . . . At this time, I got to know some people who really helped us once they found out we were also Jews. [Jews in the camps could identify each other by their names and villages.] They took us to the hospital. There were some doctors there, but the line. . . . You would have had to wait from morning until evening in order to be seen by somebody.

Making a Living

With all these problems, we decided to work, [because] the food they gave us there was impossible to eat. I said to my husband, "This is how we can get out of here alive. If we don't work, we're going to die." So we started to work. [On the outskirts of the transit camps were concession stands, selling such foods as melons and tea; these were small businesses whereby locals made money off of the refugees.] I worked for somebody who sold tea to the people in the camp. At least now I had something to eat and drink. But my husband couldn't find any work. And after two weeks or so, they found out I was Jewish and they let me go. They didn't want me to work anymore.

Then I found another job. They needed somebody who could read and write. It was actually enjoyable. At least there was enough to eat and drink. I worked there a month and a half. This was decent work, accounts. Then my husband also went to work.

Now, when it was time for me to give birth, I stopped working because I had all kinds of problems. I was so sick, I really couldn't move. My husband couldn't help. We had no money, so he had to work. For a week or so I lay in bed. I said, "Whatever will be, will be. There's nothing to do about it."

Finally I went to the clinic and it turned out I had malaria with a very high fever. It was *mazal* [luck] I got to the clinic. I said to my husband, "*Adoni* [my lord—*Kessaye used this very formal title to inject a note of irony into the role reversal here, where she gave the command*], I am sick. You are not going to work." So I took my medicines. And then I gave birth to Aliza *(long exhalation of breath).*

She was seven hundred grams [1.6 lbs.]. I could hold her in one hand. She just had the signs of feet and hands and a head. That was all you could see. The next day I was planning to make the blessings for my new child. If she lived, *mazal shela* [her good fortune], she lived. If not. . . nothing. There's nothing to do about it.

The next day I wrapped her up inside the dress I was wearing. For twenty-four hours I didn't sleep. What can I tell you? I said, "She's going to die. Any second she's going to die. She doesn't cry. She isn't eating. All she does is sleep." Every two or three hours, I tried to wake her up to nurse her. She doesn't want me. She just sleeps and sleeps and doesn't cry. For two months she didn't cry. . . . Not for water. Not for anything. I said to my husband, "If she dies in the middle of the day, what will I do? Don't go to work." I was so afraid. I held her all the time, next to my belly, day and night. Already she was becoming a real person, after two months. She was beginning to look like a real baby should look after it's born.

Then I remember that there was blood in her eyes. And I said, "That's it. She's going to die." I took her to the hospital. They said, "There's no point even in examining her. There's nothing at all we can do for her. Take her home." That's what the doctor said. So that was it. I took her home and waited for her to die.

She was born at seven months. Nobody could help her. In the two months since she had been born, she had not grown at all, not one bit. That's why the doctor didn't even want to touch her. He was sure she was going to die. But she didn't die.

Another Ghetto

[In the following segment of her story, Kessaye speaks of an unspecified "they." Probably, she is referring either to members of international relief organizations, or to workers from Israel. Israel financed the Ethiopian Jews' flights from the Sudan to Israel—in Kessaye's case via Germany—and

apparently also paid Sudanese public officials on the roads and in the airports to look the other way. However, Israelis working with Ethiopians in the Sudan never identified themselves as such, because Israel and the Sudan have no diplomatic relations.]

We finally made it out of the camp [after about two months there] to Khartoum [Sudan's capital]. They took us straight to the central bus station there and then to some house that they had rented beforehand. There were seven or eight of us in one room. It was forbidden to leave, forbidden to listen to music in Amharic, forbidden for anybody to hear us make any noise

I was like somebody dead, only I was moving.

at all, for anybody outside to know that we had arrived. [Essentially, Kessaye was in hiding. If anyone had heard Amharic, the Ethiopian language, being spoken, s/he would have known that illegal Ethiopian refugees were living there.]

This lasted for six months. It was terribly hard. We didn't get much to eat or drink. My husband was very sick. He had diarrhea and vomiting. I couldn't get any help for him. It was forbidden for any Sudanese to see him at all. I didn't know what to do. It became hotter and hotter. The two of us, my husband and I, were shut up in that house all day long. We became really despairing. Sometimes we thought of. . . I don't know, what can I tell you?

We had no information. We had no idea if we would be allowed to leave or if they were going to bury us here, kill us. We knew already that some people in the regime were receiving money for taking Jews from Gedari [another Sudanese city] through Khartoum.

Things continued in this way for some time. They told us, "You'll have to manage somehow. Go inside the embassy of Sudan and get tickets for Germany." They took us to some office of the Sudanese government in Khartoum. They told us, "Go in. Tell them that you want to leave Sudan, that you have someone waiting for you in Germany. Do what you have to do. Just get out of here and that will be that."

So, we entered this office. The entire police force was there to scare people. There were all kinds of offices we had to go through. We don't know what to tell them. We went into a room. We didn't know what to think. They are making a picture for us, some kind of identity card. There were those among us who had been living in Sudan already for several years. We looked at each other's pictures. Here we were, Jews from Ethiopia who had survived the transit camp and now we were about to go to Germany.

A night or two after we received our I.D. cards in the office in Khartoum, we were told, "You're going to fly to Germany. Everything is all set." That's it. That's what they told us. Then one night, in the middle of the night, while we were sleeping. . . a young man came and said to us, "Get up!"

Where are we going? We didn't know what this was. Maybe he was going to help us. We didn't know. He said that because of our little girl, we could go first. There were the three of us and two other young men. That was it.

They told us, "We're going to the airport [where] you'll manage once again for yourselves." As we were driving to the airport in a cab, I remember there was somebody in the middle of the road who flagged us down. We picked him up. We couldn't even see his face. The driver just kept looking ahead as he drove. Do you know why? Because the driver didn't want to know the people he was transporting. That way he could not claim any responsibility for us. We were responsible for ourselves and that was it.

Inside the airport, once again, what examinations and checks! Because we were Ethiopian, everything was hard for us. It was the middle of the night while all this checking was going on. And this was just to be able to enter the plane. We went through all that and finally we arrived at the plane itself.

To Freedom

We climbed up into the plane *(she's laughing now)*. It is the first time in my life I am climbing onto a plane. And you know the conditions—I was carrying a little girl who was sick, very sick, painfully thin. She was still having a lot of diarrhea. I needed diapers. Somebody gave me a diaper and said something to me in a language I did not understand.

After this, the entire day we were flying to Germany. There was somebody to meet us there who was Ethiopian—not Jewish—but he spoke Amharic. We asked him about the *kashrut* at the hotel [the refugees were taken to a hotel two hours from the airport]. Apparently, there are some diffi-

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GENTILES & JEWS at the Hop

A Reunion Retrospective

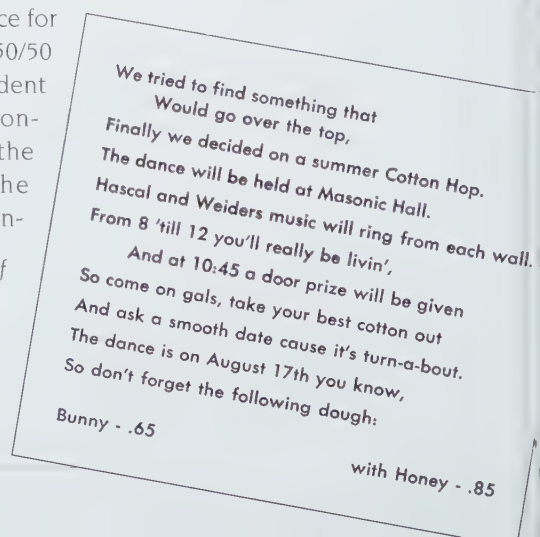
by Alix Kates Shulman

The "affair," as the reunion was called, was held not in the Cleveland Heights High School Cafeteria, as I'd expected, but at a large, comfortable country club with a well-regarded kitchen and an ample dining room divided by the dance floor into two large, separate, high-ceilinged wings. The elegance of the setting sharply contrasted with the dour Foster's Hall or Masonic Temple where we'd held our weekend dances thirty-five years before, stomping in saddle shoes or loafers. The DJ, who had expanded his high school record collection into the tools of his adult livelihood (Swing for Hire), sat on a platform at the edge of the dance floor, faithfully playing dance hits of our high school days—Bennie Goodman, Artie Shaw, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holliday, Billy Eckstein, Stan Kenton, the Ink Spots, the Dorsey Brothers, Sarah Vaughan—for 350 curious or nostalgic lindy-lovers and jitterbuggers. Three hundred and fifty out of a class of almost six hundred—not a bad turnout considering that 26 had already died, 108 were "missing," and 183 had moved out of state, according to the program.

With squeezes and squeals of recognition, I embraced one forgotten pal after another until Scott York, who'd been two years ahead of me at Heights High and was now—astonishingly—my lover, led me onto the dance floor.

This was something to celebrate. For though Scott and I had each been chosen Best Dancer back in 1950, we'd never danced together at a high school dance. Not because he was two years ahead of me, since I sometimes went out with older boys; not because we were each coupled, since even the coupled were free to dance with anyone; not because of a paucity of dances, since there were usually two every weekend sponsored by the dozen or so Greek letter clubs that ruled our social life. No, if I was never the partner of Scott York it was because each club—and dance—was, strictly and without exception, either Jewish or gentile. I was Jewish, Scott was not.

In fact, though I knew all about Scott—pictures of him making the longest or most difficult hoop shots appeared with impressive frequency in the Cleveland Plain Dealer as well as in the Heights High School Spectator, where his name had been regularly listed as Vice President of his class, Cutest Couple (with the smiling Betsy Snow), Best Dancer, highest basketball scorer—he was oblivious to me. Even as Hitler was accomplishing the ultimate separation of Jews from gentiles in the villages and cities of Europe, at our high school, during and after World War II, Jews and gentiles stayed apart in an unspoken pact. In the Front Hall beneath The Clock, the major morning gathering place for the roughly 50/50 all-white student body, Jews congregated to the east of The Clock and gen-



We tried to find something that
Would go over the top,
Finally we decided on a summer Cotton Hop.
The dance will be held at Masonic Hall.
Hascal and Weiders music will ring from each wall.
From 8 'till 12 you'll really be livin',
And at 10:45 a door prize will be given
So come on gals, take your best cotton out
And ask a smooth date cause it's turn-a-bout.
The dance is on August 17th you know,
So don't forget the following dough:
Bunny - .65
with Honey - .85

"This is the Tail of the S. A. S. Cotton Hop," reads a dance invitation, 1946.

L to R: Gerry Horowitz, Joel Rosenberg, Alix Kates, Larry Gottlieb, Joyce Richman, Mark Isler, Cleveland, 1949.

tiles to the west. Jews used the east stairs to the second floor, gentiles the west. At lunch-time Jews gathered in Clark's for their cheeseburgers, fries, and shakes, while gentiles went to.

. Frankly I don't know where the gentiles ate their lunch. Perhaps they went to the bar-b-que place on Cedar Road, perhaps to the drugstore on the corner of Cedar and Lee for chicken salad on white bread or to Mawbee's for burgers; perhaps they stayed in the school cafeteria, for all I know. To us at Clark's the fact seemed of too little consequence to warrant remembering.

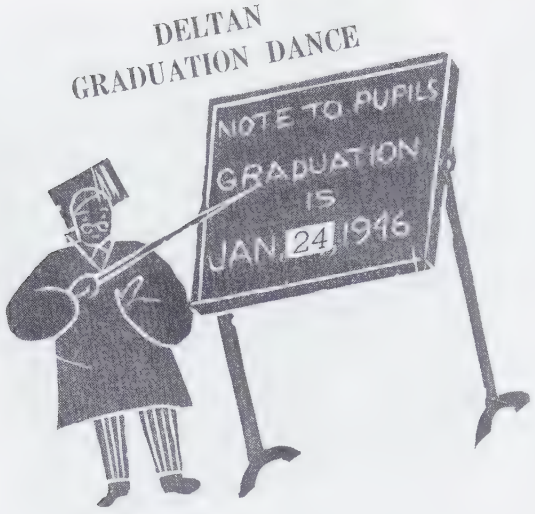
Stifled by those restrictions, as quickly as possible after graduation I emptied my head of all such facts, stuffing it instead with zygotes, blastophores, and French verb conjugations in summer school classes at the local college, getting the hardest requirements out of the way on home turf, the more assuredly to make my break to a distant college and a freer life come fall. But despite my graduation vow to renounce all things local, that summer when I walked into the biology lecture hall and recognized Scott sitting halfway back amidst the unfamiliar hordes, I mounted the stairs to his row and brazenly sat beside him.

But this story is not about the youthful palpitations of the summer heart. Therefore, suffice it to say that Scott (who was also getting requirements out of the way—*quel coincidence*!—in his case to graduate from college early) kissed me on our first field trip to the Arboretum as the first drops of rain sent the others scampering briskly ahead; I invited him to his first "classical" concert (Dvorak, he recalls); as the summer wore on we found ourselves together each Saturday afternoon flashing vocabulary cards and dissecting frogs in my garage and each Saturday night flashing our eyes and dissecting our feelings at the Blue Moon Cafe and later parked somewhere in Scott's ancient Ford. Three indelible details remain with me from that long, distant summer: Scott's animated blue eyes opening so wide in conversation as to perfectly ring the pale blue irises with white; his fingers on the table forming jumping tents for emphasis; and the peculiar voiced sighs that escaped his lips about every third kiss.

When the summer ended, I went off to college as planned, he to serve his stint in the Navy and on to graduate school, each eventually fading into the other's charged but distant memory. Then, one Christmas thirty-four years later, Scott York, divorced, appeared at my door in New York City in the very season of my own divorce. In one decisive instant the champ leaped up to drop the ball of the past through the high hoop of the present, as I, cheering, eagerly invited him in. The blond hair was faded and thin, though supplemented below by a trim, still-yellow mustache. But as we sat talking before a sputtering fire, Scott's animated eyes widened to reveal familiar dramatic rings of white around the blue; his fingers formed dancing tents for emphasis; and suddenly I wondered: does he still sigh that funny way every three kisses?

Yes! Living together for a summer, Scott and I poured our lives into a single pot. We boiled down our disparate years until we were left with the familiar fragrant essence of a shared childhood and common origins. The startling postwar presumptions and rigidities that had grossly exaggerated our differences to keep us exotic and apart the first time, now dissolved in our newly discovered similarities.

No wonder I responded gleefully to the announce-



ment of my thirty-fifth high school reunion, even though I had ignored the tenth, twentieth, and twenty-fifth. Tickled to be living proof of the absurdity of the pugnacious, obsolete restrictions of our youth, I wrote the reunion committee that I was coming. Putting my money where my heart was, I enclosed a check to cover two tickets and filled in the line headed "accompanied?" with the name that had reverberated in my (and, I trusted, the Committee's) romantic memory through the eventful, transforming, intervening years of the deadly fifties, the wild sixties, the serious seventies, and the greedy eighties.

Seeing the tables filling up fast, we left the dance floor to grab a couple of seats at a table with some of my former friends. A tall, large-eyed woman named Phyllis Cohn whom I barely remembered ran up to us and gushed: All my life I've wanted to kiss Scott York, and now I'm going to do it! Graciously I watched. (*Noblesse oblige.*)

Between courses I circulated among the familiar faces, reviving the past. As we stood on one of the food lines for dessert Scott whispered a shocking observation: With the exception of a few people on the dance floor, it looked to him as if only the Jewish half of the class had turned out for this reunion.

I quickly scanned the faces visible on our side of the dance floor. Indeed, at every table sat my old Jewish friends. Where were the others? Eating and chatting, nobody else seemed to notice the absence of half the class. Well, no one had troubled about the other half in high school either.

Unless, added Scott thoughtfully, all the gentiles are sitting in the other wing, beyond the dance floor. . . .

After dessert we danced across to the other side and were abashed to find Scott's hunch confirmed. There were all the ones I had forgotten: my best friend from elementary school (pre-puberty, before the ethnic gates were locked), my alphabetical next of kin, my Victory Garden partner, my scholastic rival, the girls I was friends with in class but never out, the boys I flirted with but never kissed. There they sat on the other side of the dance floor, the other half, our mirror image, eating and chatting excitedly just like us and quite as oblivious of us as we were of them.

The whites of his eyes circled the blues as an amazed Scott tried to announce his discovery, but no one paid any attention. In the Jewish wing, likewise, no one was impressed or even surprised by my revelation; people had simply, "naturally," sat with their "friends." Evidently, separation was so customary here that, like a persistent smog, it was invisible; and if made visible, then unexceptionable. Thirty-five years of history had made no difference at all.

Scott visited my grandmother's rabbi to see about taking lessons in Judaism, despite my atheistic demurrers. On his first visit he told the rabbi he was in love with a Jewish woman and received three booklets to study, one fat, two thin. When he had read all three and returned for a second visit, a receptionist told him the rabbi was on the phone but would be with him shortly. As he took a seat in the outer office to wait, he couldn't help overhearing the rabbi say from the next room, "Listen, I've got this *goy* waiting, so I've got to hang up. But as soon as I can get rid of him I'll call you back."

We didn't respond to preliminary inquiries about my fortieth class reunion; we'd seen enough. Back in New York, our own reunion had been formalized in a secular marriage ceremony performed by a feminist friend, now a judge. For dancing, we simply rolled up the rugs in our Chelsea loft (which is never segregated).

At this year's Thanksgiving, for example, the seven people who clasped hands around our table while I pronounced a simple but exuberant one-word "thanks" included: my twenty-six-year-old daughter, Polly; a writer friend, Nancy, with southern Baptist origins; her new lover, a Sufi dancer named Eileen whom we were meeting for

Alix Kates Shulman, 1949.

the first time; and a young German couple, Andreas and Anke, sculptors on a three-week trip to the States whom Scott had met abroad the previous summer. We'd assembled this motley group, mostly strangers to each other, serendipitously and in the interests of cultural exchange. Thanksgiving, after all, the most sacramental of our national holidays, celebrates the mingling of two cultures: the European Pilgrims and Native Americans who with gifts of food saved the Pilgrims' lives.

After our moment of thanks, everyone clicked glasses and settled in to eat. As we passed the turkey, cranberries, and sweet potatoes, I recounted the story of Thanksgiving to the German guests, dutifully including the bitter postscript that in time the Pilgrims' descendants isolated and excluded their native benefactors whose descendents now live apart on "reservations."

While we were discussing what manner of fruit are cranberries the conversation took an unexpected lurch. Andreas, who had spent the day showing slides of his work to art galleries and visiting museums, suddenly launched a bitter complaint about homosexuals dominating the New York art scene.

What? cried the rest of us in unison, exchanging looks of shocked disbelief. (Hadn't Hitler, another failed art student, blamed his failure on a conspiracy of left-wing Jews?) Overcoming our embarrassment, one by one we firmly if politely rushed to correct him. But Andreas only fortified himself with a swallow of wine, wiped his mouth on his napkin, raised his voice and proclaimed: But this is not opinion, this is a fact! Why do you question it? Everyone knows homosexuals all stick together. Just like the Jews. It is simply a fact!

We looked around at each other, aghast. The blood had drained from Polly's cheeks; Scott's eyebrows were up, his irises ringed with white; Anke, eyes closed, was slowly shaking her head; Eileen put down her fork and folded her hands; Nancy, red-faced and puffing, cleared her throat to begin—but only meaningless syllables came stammering out. And I, hearing the insidious inuendos being presented to us, two Jews, two lesbians, and Scott, twisted my napkin in my clammy hands, too stunned to speak.

When we recovered our voices, if not our appetites, we took turns tossing the initiative back and forth as we presented our reasoned arguments to Andreas. Even Anke, despite her limited English, was nodding with us, not him. But he only grew more obstinate. And then the moment for us to confront him with our outrage and reveal our identities passed. Instead, with diminishing heart, we continued to marshall our civilized, sophisticated, but helpless arguments, as if it were possible to reason with bigotry, until the plates were cleared, the pumpkin tasted, the meal and argument abandoned.

Alpha Tau Alpha fraternity dance, 1945.

Enough! This time I could not simply swallow my distress, silently letting it pass. After a week of brooding I posted a five-page letter to Andreas in Berlin expressing my pent-up sorrow and outrage. And though he never replied, that letter started me wondering why I hadn't protested to the Reunion Committee or to my grandmother's smug rabbi or to any of the dozen others who keep popping out of my memory to confront me with my laxity, like the surprising reflection that greets me from every plate-glass window. Perhaps it is easier to express my distress to a stranger than to the familiar people I grew up with or to someone my grandmother admired. Or can it be that, like some anti-German bigot, I was finally provoked by Andreas's German accent?

Whatever the reason, I have now begun to resist. When the next class reunion rolls around I intend to join the program committee so that after the class predictions have been read I can walk up to the mike, beckon everyone near, and deliver at last an impassioned speech that, though brief, will explode in all the aging hearts in the room. (It's never too late!) Then, as the DJ turns up the volume on "Frenesi," Scott and I will each take someone from the other half out onto the dance floor where we will keep changing partners on into the night until everyone has danced with everyone in a glad and truer reunion.

Alix Kates Shulman has written four novels, published by Knopf: Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen, Burning Questions, On the Stroll, *and* In Every Woman's Life..., *as well as two books on Emma Goldman, three books for children, and numerous stories and essays*

How Our Mothers Nursed Us: The Children of Holocaust Survivors Revisit Their Infancy

by Dina Wardi

For over fifteen years, Dina Wardi, a psychotherapist of Italian birth, has specialized in group therapy with the grown children of Holocaust survivors in Israel.

She calls her clients, all born after the Holocaust, "memorial candles," in reference to how deeply these second-generation survivors have participated in their parents' emotional worlds, and to how iconic their missions are: like actual wax memorial candles, these children are themselves flickering mnemonics—linking the Holocaust past, with its dark, tragic pull, to the difficult promise of bright, well-lighted futures.

What Wardi's clients struggle with most, then, is not past or future, but present: *How can they experience their own tiny existence as real, as significant? How can they simultaneously accede to their ineluctable group membership as second-generation survivors, and also create lives for themselves that are maturely and fully individuated?*

Wardi works with groups of ten to twelve clients (ranging in age from 25 to 35) who meet weekly for a period of four years. (Each group member also meets with Wardi weekly for individual therapy.) The therapist's group techniques include analyzing dreams, sharing and interpreting early childhood experiences, and attending to whatever's going on, moment to moment, in the room. Relying largely on psychodynamic theory, Wardi herself is trained in family, group, and Gestalt methods (she studied with Fritz Perls).

In the following verbatim dialogue, group members discuss their relationships, as infants, with their mothers, and one woman, Ahuva, finds the deep, sudden strength to acknowledge an unspoken source, in her own family, of transgenerational grief.

—Susan Schnur

Naomi: Recently my mother told me what happened when I was born. Unlike her other pregnancies (all of which had ended in miscarriages or premature stillbirths), with me she stayed in bed for months.

It must have been very hard for her, because she's like me, full of energy and always running around and doing things. She said that as soon as she felt me beginning to move within her, she got right into bed and didn't get out again.

I never knew—perhaps because I didn't want to know—how partial and unsatisfying the relationship between my parents was, how little togetherness was really there. This week, when my mother told me about her pregnancy with me, I was able for the first time to really feel and to identify with her terrible loneliness. She added one very poignant and telling sentence: "If my mother had been with me then, at my side, everything would have been different."

I am named after my grandmother, who was shot and killed on the death march, and my young mother continued to march. . . .You know, I was born on my grandmother's birthday. No, not exactly, actually it was two days later. But

From the autobiographical film "The Summer of Aviya," written by Gila Almagor about her life as an Israeli daughter of a Holocaust survivor.

This article is excerpted with permission from Memorial Candles: Children of the Holocaust *by Dina Wardi (Tavistock/Routledge, 1992).*

my mother told me that during her entire pregnancy she planned to give birth on the day her own mother was born. And when that day arrived she actually had contractions and went to the hospital to give birth, but it was only false labor. The doctors sent her home, and I was born two days later.

Still, my mother always says that my grandmother and I were born on the same day. She also told me that the moment I was born she immediately noticed that I had long fingers, and right then she decided that I would play the piano just as my grandmother had.

Hava : My mother breast-fed me for about two months. Then she stopped. I don't know exactly what happened. Perhaps she ran out of milk. Perhaps she ran out of patience. She immediately went out to work and I was left with a baby-minder.

My mother was only twenty years old, and my father tells me she had no idea what to do with me. She was constantly tense and anxious, and when I would cry—and apparently, from what I've heard, I cried a lot—she couldn't hold me in her arms. She would give me to my father to hold because she had no idea how to calm me down. She would get into a state of such anxiety that she wasn't capable of functioning at all. She wasn't happy with me.

Hemda : My mother told me over and over—for years—that she nearly died when I was born. The birth lasted three days, and there were very many difficulties along the way, so that it wasn't certain if either she or I would come out of it unharmed.

After the birth she was so weak and depressed that she was forced, or chose, to lie in bed for several months, and she was almost unable to function. I apparently cried quite a lot and didn't want to eat.

When I was about nine months old they decided to put me in a WIZO [Women's International Zionist Organization] institution, and there, according to the stories, I started to eat a little, but I stopped crying completely. My father told me once that he came to visit me and saw me standing in the crib for hours and rocking, with a frozen expression on my face—I almost stopped reacting altogether. I was there more than half a year and then my mother recovered and they brought me home.

Mordechai : My mother told me that she breast-fed me in the hotel where we were living four families to a room before we immigrated to Israel. I don't know how it really was. She was always so restless. Even now she can't sit quietly, just relaxed, and enjoy something. She's always running around, always going from here to there.

When I try to imagine the situation there, in a quarter of a room in a hotel, with only a hanging blanket separating the families, I think it must have been very uncomfortable. I can imagine my mother sitting and holding me and nursing me, but she's not looking at me, her glance is traveling from place to place. The tension and anxiety she still feels today must surely have been even stronger then. Everyone was tense in those days, because no one knew exactly what awaited them.

They had indeed succeeded in escaping from hell, but they had left so much there. There wasn't a moment of silence for this baby—which was me—and I certainly didn't have my own crib. There was no chance for intimacy at any time.

To this day, it's hard for me to get really close to my mother, it's hard for me to really talk to her. When I try, I feel a lot of tension. If I do talk, it's more with my father, or when the whole family is there—it's very hard for me to talk to my mother alone.

Alma : My mother told me that when I was born she stopped working and stayed home, to be only with me. She tried to nurse me but she didn't have enough milk. She tried so hard, sitting for hours and squeezing the milk from her breast drop by drop, then holding me out far on her lap and feeding me these drops with a spoon.

Malka [the therapist's aide] : You know, it seems very strange that she fed you that way, with a spoon, on her lap. When I was nursing my son, even when I didn't have enough milk and I gave him a bottle, I always held him close to me, this was the most important thing for me and I think for him too, to feel him close.

Alma : Yes, but she tried so hard. . . and she would sit for hours and squeeze her breasts. Perhaps it's connected with the fact that her first baby died of hunger in her arms,

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there in the ghetto. . . . She once told me that there wasn't any food at all, and she had no milk to give her and so she died. . . . I don't know exactly what happened there.

Shimon [with an embarrassed smile]: I don't know, this story of Ahuva's doesn't sound so strange to me. My mother told me a story a little bit like that. She said that

Perhaps it's connected with the fact that her first baby died of hunger in her arms, there in the ghetto...

when I was nursing she had problems. It hurt her to nurse me because she had sores around her nipples. Perhaps I bit her too hard.

She took a kind of tube that the milk from her breasts would be pumped into and I sucked on this long tube. Today it actually does seem very terrible to have been connected to my mother through this tube and not directly.

Zuppia : I can't even imagine nursing from my mother, or even sitting quietly on her lap and enjoying it. Even picturing it makes me tense. I have pictures of myself as a baby, and I look terribly fat, with such a round, full doll-face. The only thing my mother gave me was food. More and more food. But my face in the pictures is empty, totally expressionless.

Itzhak : The feeling or memory I have inside me, in my innermost feelings—and I don't know exactly where this feeling comes from, after all it's impossible to remember from such an early age—anyway, my feeling as a baby was that my mother was around, nearby, but she didn't hold me really close to her. I wanted so much all those years—this I remember from a later age—to feel held, to feel her body. All in all I've always felt very lonely.

Aryc : I remember that when I was very little, my mother would often sit in a closed, dim room, with the shutters half-closed, and chain-smoke. Or sometimes she would sit on a chair and hold my sister on her lap, when she was a baby, and rock her for hours and hours. Even when she hadn't been crying. My mother would hold her to her breast and murmur all sorts of vague things, something between speech and crying, or a kind of repeated incessant groaning.

When I would come in, I would stand in the corner and stare at her quietly, and she wouldn't even notice that I was there. Finally, when she would pick up her eyes, she would look at me with this strange sort of look. Her expression seemed to be frozen, and her eyes frightened me, she had such a glassy and empty look, as if she didn't recognize me, as if she were somewhere else, far away, scary.

Of course I didn't know then what this was doing to me. Now, when I see my mother with this look sometimes, it makes me angry. It makes me want to shake her. Now I realize that it arouses quite strong anxiety in me, or some kind of disquiet—heart-pounding such as I feel sometimes

here too, and sometimes in various situations in my life.

And then I cut myself off, I run away from this anxiety, I don't know what I'm afraid of at these moments. Now, for the first time, I can connect this somehow with my mother, with her frozen glassy look. She doesn't respond to me, she doesn't sense herself or me. Her loneliness became mixed with my loneliness.

Hava : As a baby, they tell me, I screamed and cried. I cried for days on end, and my mother didn't know what to do. She couldn't cope with my crying. To this day I'm not sure why. Perhaps I also had a feeling of loneliness like what Itzhak describes.

Ahuva [very pale and agitated, rejoins the conversation]: I was a terribly good baby. I didn't cry at all. My mother says that when I was a few weeks old she taught me to not cry, and I learned quickly and never cried. Actually, until this very day, my whole life, I almost never cry. Even when I want to very much I feel that I can't do it. I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times I've shed tears in my life. Even in therapy.

(The therapist responds that she had indeed sensed that even here, in therapy, Ahuva doesn't allow herself to cry, and she comments that crying is a way of expressing strong feelings and that for a baby who doesn't have any language, crying is the only way to ask for what she needs.)

Malka [the therapist's aide]: If my baby didn't cry, I wouldn't know what he wanted or needed. I wouldn't be able to respond to him in all sorts of situations. How do you understand this, Ahuva, that your mother didn't want you to cry, how did she manage to communicate with you?

(The therapist comments that perhaps Ahuva's crying caused her mother intense pain because it reminded her of her first baby, who cried and cried and died of hunger before her eyes, and she couldn't save her.)

I am named after my grandmother who was shot and killed on the death march.

Ahuva begins to sob quietly. The other members of the group are very moved, and some of them begin to cry with her. Then Ahuva begins to murmur through her tears: "Perhaps that was why my mother couldn't hold me close to her. It was like holding that other baby once again."

Indeed (writes the therapist later), if Ahuva's mother had held Ahuva close, and had let her cry, she too would have begun to cry. Not only for her dead baby, but also for her parents and her sisters, for her young husband and her grandfathers and grandmothers. And if she had begun to cry, she might not have been able to stop at all.

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ONCE MORE WITH YOU
by Helen Papell

These days of love are lollipops
dropped free to a child

a woman's shoulder-flutter
Is sister
to a crane's wing in a field of corn,
The crane hovers over its mate
startled with moon

I know that love is witch's brew and
witches were the ones who burned,

And my ancestor Ruth who rounded
her apron with grains
comes to warn me of her fate:
fill the eyes of he
and you will grandmother a king.

I'm not a child; and though I hear
years hungry as jaws
stalk behind the coupling
and the corn,

I'm once more with you
wind-stunned.

YIDDISH
by Layle Silbert

on the second anniversary
of Liberation
the Polish consul in Shanghai
gave a garden party in Hongkew
here Jews stayed alive
during the war by not being
in Europe
a bearded rabbi with blue eyes
spoke to me in local dialect
I shrugged smiled
he spoke in Polish then Russian
tried German

suddenly in the hot summer air
of China
in the sweet flow of a
forgotten spring
I found my mother tongue
rapturous I answered in the
common language
we'd both been born into
in Poland in America
I laughed at his accent
he laughed at mine Lithuanian
learned from my father
it didn't matter

SUBWAY SONG
by Lucy Cohen Schmeidler

big black man hugging the
subway pole
sings to himself, not loud but
audibly,
parts of a song
and then just humming—
crazy or not, it makes no
difference—
melody from his soul
that settles into my bones
until I want to harmonize

(but I, small white woman,
keep my mouth closed
and my eyes elsewhere)

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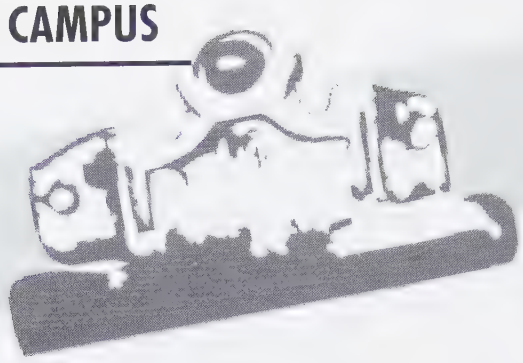


IDENTITY POLITICS AT SUMMER CAMP

"Here's Where I Learned to be a Jew and a Woman"

—by Hadar Dubowsky

"At camp I learned not only Israeli folk dances and how to sing *Birkat Hamazon* [grace after meals], but also how to share clothes, shave my legs, and ask a boy to dance." Recently, Jewish camps have gained attention in the "Jewish continuity" debates, as a framework which gives youth a strong sense of Jewish identity. Just as Jewish overnight camps recognize and capitalize on their role in fostering Jewish identity, so too can they recognize their influence in the formation of gender identity.

Whether the ideological platform is secular, Conservative, Jewish arts-and-culture-oriented, Federation-sponsored, Reform, Socialist Zionist, Orthodox, Yiddishist or Labor Zionist, Jewish co-ed overnight camps provide a unique opportunity for Jewish youth to experience living in a completely Jewish environment. Jewish camps not only give kids a chance to have fun, learn new skills, and be away from home, but also to make deep connections and build friendships with other young Jews.

Like the army or kindergarten, camp is a unifying and socializing force, bringing together youngsters from different backgrounds to learn common values, customs, and social norms. "At school, I was one of ten Jews in a class of five hundred, so being at camp was wonderful. I finally felt I was part of a whole instead of an oddity," says a female camper from the Reform Movement's Joseph and Betty Harlam Camp in Pennsylvania.

But Jewish camps teach not only Jewish identity but also gender identity. Jewish girls at camp learn not only what it is to be Jewish but also what it is to be female. The question is: do camps carry on and reinforce familiar stereotypes, or do they consciously work to change traditional gender roles?

Jewish overnight camps are summer homes to teenage campers and counselors who are beginning to explore their sexuality. What kind of messages are Jewish camps sending about dating and relationships? When situations of possible harassment arise are they covered up? Treated with sensitivity? Used as educational opportunities? At camp, kids are all over each other, sharing bunks and bathrooms. What is being taught about respecting each other's boundaries and personal space? About respecting difference and diversity in the midst of community? Do camps address the real issues and dilemmas which face teens today: AIDS and AIDS prevention, date rape and sexual assault, sexuality, sexual pressure and sexual preferences, body image and eating disorders, gender roles and stereotypes? Are camps teaching boys and girls both survival skills and *menschlichkeit*?

The best Jewish camps, successful in creating a close-knit community, are the ideal environments for confronting these sensitive issues. How so? First, there is continuity. At many camps the counselors were once campers, and the same campers have been attending for years, fostering viewing each other as individuals rather than as stereotypes. "From age six until eighteen, camp was the center of my life. Even my school year was scheduled around camp, planning for the next summer or how we could all see each other during winter or spring breaks,"

says Tammi Indianer, who went to Camp Blue Star, a privately owned Jewish camp in North Carolina.

Second, because camp is an intense experience–with participants spending twenty-four hours a day together, for weeks or months–trust, respect and cooperation are highly valued. Camps are, in fact, one of the few places left in modern life where people function as a tribal society; a variety of people live and work together, focusing on the good of the community instead of on individuals or dyads. At camp, individuals are accountable for their own behavior and also responsible to the group.

Third: camp counselors are in an excellent position to educate younger Jews informally. *Madrichim* [counselors] often sleep in the same bunk or tent with campers, in addition to their daytime contact. And in those informal moments, over breakfast, on a hike, waiting for a shower, counselors have tremendous influence. Because of the safe intimacy a good Jewish camp environment fosters, campers often look to their counselors for guidance and support in ways that they don't turn to their parents and teachers.

Lastly, Jewish camps provide an opportunity to address issues of sexuality and sex roles, respect and equality, within a context of Jewish values. If the counselors and campers are Orthodox or religiously observant, the *halakhic* view of sexual conduct can be taught and reinforced. For example, at Camp Ramah in the Poconos there is an educational unit entitled "*B'zelem Elohim*," [In the Image of God], which focuses on how we should treat our bodies and each other, tying in sex, drug use and body image.

Here's what camps teach about:

WOMEN IN JUDAISM

Perhaps Judaism itself is the area where the greatest steps have been taken towards gender equality. Most camps, either by their denominational affiliation or in their literature, make it clear whether and how often they have religious services and whether they are egalitarian—that is, include girls as full and equal participants. Most religious services in non-Orthodox camps (this article is based on information gathered from a variety of non-Orthodox camps) are egalitarian. Camp services can be more progressive and experimental than home congregations. For example, at Camp Ramah in California, girls are encouraged "to try roles and actions they wouldn't normally do, like wearing *tallitot* and *t'fillin*," says Melanie Berman, Programming Director.

Some camps consciously incorporate the experiences of women and girls into their Jewish curriculum. At Camp Yavneh in New Hampshire, sponsored by Hebrew College of Brookline, Massachusetts, morning classes have focused on the Book of Ruth and other women in the Bible, and at Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, affiliated with the Reform movement, a group of girls, led by a feminist counselor, created their own *Rosh Hodesh* [new moon] rituals.

STEREOTYPES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

The steps which a camp takes towards education about gender stereotypes and sexual equality depends on the awareness, ideology and commitment of the administration and counselors, and may vary from summer to summer, bunk to bunk. Says one counselor: "One year we happened to hire a woman sports specialist instead of a man, and it changed the girls' entire outlook on sports. Then they really wanted to play basketball and not just sit in on the sidelines."

Camps, because they are separate from the outer world, can create a totally new environment, one where girls and boys can be relieved from some of the gender roles they face in their usual lives. "Camp was different than P.E. classes where boys had to run more than girls or do more chin-ups. At camp I was encouraged to play soccer with the guys," says Indianer. At some camps, the kids live in tents, with less access to electricity and mirrors, and less pressure for girls to spend time on their appearance. "The

counselors got together and decided that there would be no make-up and no mirrors allowed on the three-day canoe trip," says Riqi Kosovske, a former *madricha* at Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute. The safety created by camp can free girls from concerns and fear they face in the outer world. "In Boulder I could never walk outside alone at night, but at camp I could," says Amy.

Boys at camp, too, have the chance to take risks and break out of sex-role constraints. Danny Shapiro, who was a counselor at Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute says of his campers, "Boys who would never hug a guy at home or display verbal affection let their guard down at camp and felt comfortable showing that affection."

However, camp programs and curricula can—sadly—reflect antiquated sexist attitudes found in the world at large. "One evening program was a 'Battle of the Sexes.' The boys had to wear blue and the girls had to wear pink," says a female counselor from Camp Young

Judea in New Hampshire. "I told *my* campers to wear purple in protest."

Some camps have a long tradition of commitment to gender equality and building women leaders. "I attended camp from age six through my college years, 1930-1945" says Selma Berrol. "Surprisingly, in view of the times, they discouraged us from primping and flirting, stressing the development of our skills and independence instead." Other camps have changed over time. "When I was a camper in the 1980's we had programs like beauty contests and Mr. and Miss Israel. We didn't used to think about it," a counselor from a Jewish camp in Pennsylvania recalls. "Now we don't do programs like that because counselors are becoming more politically aware."

More and more, camps are developing programs specifically focusing on gender issues and stereotypes. At Camp Kutz, the Reform Movement's national teen leadership camp, in Warwick, New York, teenagers were separated by sex into small groups to meet regularly and discuss a range of topics including peer relations, familial conflict and body image. In one session they were given the words "Jewish man" and "Jewish woman" and discussed their own stereotypes and images. Another camp has planned an evening program for senior campers to analyze the damaging anti-semitism and misogyny behind the "JAP" stereotype.

Habonim Dror Camp Galil, in Ottsville, Pennsylvania, had an elective group called *chug nashim* [women's group]. Open to female campers age 13-16, this *chug* discussed feminist texts, visited a local Planned Parenthood, and organized a "Take Back the Night" evening activity for the entire camp. "Take Back the Night" began with a march around the camp with signs saying "End Violence Against Women and Children." The march ended in the dining hall, where the campers settled onto the floor to listen to anti-violence readings, sing peace songs and write anonymous notes about their experience with violence and sexism. The notes were collected and read aloud and then thrown into a gigantic "Sexist Garbage Can."

SEXUALITY:

The majority of camps respond to the topic of sexuality/sex/sexual assault in any of three ways:

- by running programs during staff training to explicitly educate counselors about detecting sexually abused children and to condemn "shnookie between *chanichim* [campers] and *madrichim* [counselors]" as one counselor put it;
- by attempting to reduce or eliminate sexual activity between campers and sometimes between counselors;
- by denying that sexual assault, sex, and sexuality exist at camp as significant issues at all.

The first category, addressing sexual abuse during staff training, is often motivated, if not mandated, by legal reasons. One camp director says of a tri-state conference on sexual abuse: "We'll be having our lawyers and insurance people there." Legally, camps are obligated to report any suspected cases of abuse to the local authorities. Training sessions, often a week long at the beginning of the summer, teach staff how to detect an abused child along with first aid, discipline techniques, and child development.

Counselors are also given guidelines for appropriate displays of affection between staff members, as well as warnings forbidding sexual contact between staff and campers. Some camps teach counselors how to distinguish friendly ways of touching a child from touch that is inappropriate and invasive. "A lot has changed since I was a camper," one counselor recalls. "I remember sitting on male counselors' laps—it wasn't seen as a problem. Now, we talk a lot about girls not sitting on male counselors' laps, about limiting teasing and tickling, and other areas where touch can become ambiguous."

Outside of the staff training, camps usually deal with sexuality by trying to chase it away with rules and policies intended to contain and reduce sexual pressure and tension. David Frank,

A Feminist Program From Camp Towanga

The program, designed for 200 campers and 40 staff members begins with a skit by counselors, set on the Starship Enterprise. The Starship Crew has managed to create a perfect, non-sexist, non-hierarchical society. Unfortunately they have landed on Planet X, a society in which sexism prevails. They decide that they must violate the Prime Directive and interfere with what is happening on Planet X. They enlist campers to travel with them to various places on Planet X and act as rebels in eradicating any trace of sexism on the planet.

The campers rotate to different stations. At Station 1, Roles in Society, the campers are given a list of jobs and tasks and must decide whether they should be done by a man, a woman or both. Station 2 the campers listen to and discuss a rap song and then write their own non-sexist rap song. Other stations focus on famous Jewish women, reproductive rights, and God language.

Director of Education and Programming for the UAHC youth division, explains about Camp Kutz: "We have 160 teenagers together, away from their parents, with a tremendous amount of access to each other, and the camp has a responsibility to the kids and the parents to establish what are appropriate levels of sexuality at camp."

Most camps try to avoid addressing the topic of sex in any meaningful way, with a "just say no" attitude. A camp director says: "We not only tell the girls they *can* say no, we tell them that they *should* say no." Not only does this approach not leave room to deal with the issues faced by girls who already are sexually active, it also does not teach girls how to respond to sexual pressure, or how to protect themselves both verbally and physically if they are ever faced with sexual assault—nor does it deal with a boy's role or responsibility.

By far the most common response to sex and sexual assault at camp is denial that it happens at all. Rape and sexual assault *do* happen at Jewish camps. Female campers and counselors alike report, "don't use my name but. . . I was forced to have sex with a 'guy friend' when I was a CIT at camp," or "when I was a counselor a girl told me that she had been gang raped in the woods at camp." Jewish camps are not immune to the problems facing our larger society. One out of every three women will be raped in her lifetime, and the majority of rapes occur before the age of eighteen; a third of all rapes occur between ages 11 and 17 according to U.S. goverment agencies and published sources. This is a crisis situation which only recently has begun to receive a small fraction of the attention it deserves.

Even at camps where counselors have reported cases of sexual assault, camp directors deny that sexual assault occurs at their camp. "We are a tight-knit camp," said one assistant director. "We don't have a need to educate about rape." When asked if she had ever thought of addressing date rape or sexual assault in her staff training, another camp director replied, "what they do on their own time is their own business." Camp directors, blinded by denial, disbelief, and fear, have been reluctant to develop rape prevention educational programs or to take swift action when a child shows signs of being sexually abused or complains of sexual harassment. A counselor from a camp in the Midwest reports that "when girls were complaining about a male counselor pinching their butts the administration hardly paid attention. There were no other channels for handling that kind of complaint

Positive sexual experiences happen at camp too. Many agree with Stacey, who says that "camp friends, the guys you've known for years and feel totally comfortable with, are the best people to be learning about sex with." Off the record, counselors, ex-campers, and even camp directors will tell you that there is sexual activity at camp. One camp director said "Yes, it's happening. We stifle them but it doesn't inhibit them." Alumni from a wide range of Jewish co-ed overnight camps tell stories about kisses, crushes, gay and lesbian experiences, making out, and making ove. "My boyfriend and I used to make out in the Hebrew *kita* [classroom]," says one ex-camper from Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute, "but don't give my name."

Perhaps because of the controversy surrounding sex education, condom distribution, and AIDS education, or because of their own confusion about their responsibility or right to teach sex education, most camp directors try to stay clear of the topic and pass the buck. At Camp Hess Kramer in Malibu, California, staffers are trained "not to discuss personal experiences. If a camper has a question we can get the doctor or nurse to discuss the topic," says Michelle Shiper, Director of Operations. "They probably get that kind of education in school," says another camp director. "They don't need to learn it at camp."

But camp counselors tell a different story. They speak of kids being confused, misinformed, and hungry for information and honest discussion, even in this age of increased publicity about sexual behavior and AIDS. "Boys would come up to me and ask about my relationship," says Danny Shapiro. "I'd try to talk about the nature of a relationship, beyond just the status of having a girlfriend or getting some action before 'lights out.'" Counselors are there in the front line of day to day activities, conversations, and teenage drama, and act as role models, confidants and mentors. "A girl came to me and told me that her boyfriend was pressuring her to give him a blow job and she didn't want to but didn't want to lose him and didn't know what to do," says a counselor.

Although still few in number, more and more camps are beginning to have formal programs for either staff or older campers with discussion or speakers on "teen issues" such as sexuality, gender dynamics, sexual assault, sexual preferences, safer sex, AIDS, and substance abuse. For example, training programs at Camp Ramah include a section on AIDS education, and staff at Camp Yavneh are trained to watch for eating disorders among girls. At Camp Towanga, in Groveland, California, role-playing situations at staff training have included a kid having a crush on a counselor, a male counselor pressuring a

Gay Block

female counselor to have sex with him, and a counselor telling another counselor that he is gay. These role-plays are intended to educate the counselors not only as counselors, but as people grappling with these issues themselves, at camp, at home, and on campus.

Some camps are able to move past denial and use incidents as educational opportunities. At one camp a group of boys was putting marks on the wall near their beds to represent kisses from different girls. The entire camp community immediately responded to the incident with definite disapproval, leading to a camp discussion. Girls spoke about how it felt to be objectified and boys spoke about how they too felt victimized by this "game." Together, the kids and counselors discussed: Is it just a game? It is harmless? What are the implications of such behavior?

The recent publicity about sexual harassment has touched camps. Three large Jewish camps will do educational programming on sexual harassment for the first time this summer. Camps are paying more attention to charges of harassment. At one New England camp, when a female camper complained that a male staff member had stolen her hat, shoved it down his pants and made lewd comments, the camp director sent him away that same day. "It's important to send a message of what's okay and what's not," declared the camp director.

At Camp Towanga, there is absolutely no "raiding." Deborah Newbrun, Associate Director, explains to the staff that "we can never know about anyone's experience with touching and so we must be very careful about crossing people's boundaries." This rule not only creates a space which may be more comfortable for children who have been abused, but also teaches about the importance of consent, especially when it comes to touch.

Sometimes the campers themselves bring an increased awareness; Camp Kutz began doing more intense "sensitivity training" when campers themselves noticed an increase "in gay-bashing and verbal hostility, a reflection of a backlash against feminismin the outer world." At Habonim Dror Machane Bonim, located in Five Rivers, Michigan, "the campers, living six to a tent with communal showers, brought up in open forums issues of boundaries and space including a sexual edge," says former *madricha* Deb Waxman. "The kids saw that summer as the groundwork for their upcoming year together on kibbutz and wanted to become aware of their dynamics and to work to modify treatment of each other."

At some camps, the initiative for feminist and anti-violence programming comes from camp directors and administration. But often, the programming is the initiative of individual counselors who bring their feminist passions and organizational skills with them. Many feminist counselors are able to adapt programs they have used on college campuses to the camp environment. "One woman who had been working with anti-violence organizations at the University of Oregon did a workshop on sexual harassment, teaching the connections between cat calls and rape," says Waxman.

However, in situations where the responsibility for a feminist agenda is left up to individual counselors, the counselors are sometimes left to struggle with administrators or their peers. "I had clashing interests with a counselor who felt that we were cluttering up Zionist ideology with our social action issues," says one counselor.

Jewish camps can begin to take advantage of their unique educational opportunity by using the slew of educational materials on teen issues—including videos, pamphlets, games, and curricula—that have been developed for classrooms and youth groups, community centers and afterschool programs. For example, Alternatives to Domestic Violence, an agency in Hackensack, New Jersey, runs workshops in the public high schools, teaching teenagers about sex role stereotypes, dating violence, communication skills, and personal rights by having them role-play potentially abusive situations. In

Brooklyn, NY, The Center for Anti-Violence Education has a program called Action for Young Women's Empowerment, which teaches teenage girls self-defense strategies for dealing with sexual assault, date rape, and violence at school or at home.

Jewish camps build a strong sense of Jewish identity, pride and leadership. It's no surprise that many of the women leaders in Jewish feminist life—scholars, rabbis, writers, and innovators—have backgrounds that include Jewish camping. We now have an opportunity to integrate into the Jewish camp experience a more inclusive feminist agenda, drawn from the larger women's community and from the insights and texts of the current wave of Jewish feminism.

3 WAYS TO MAKE A GOOD SUMMER CAMP *GREAT*

1. Jewish camps can learn from existing programs and adapt them to a Jewish and camp-oriented framework. For example, a discussion on *Tish'a B'av* [the Jewish holy day marking the destruction of the Temples] as the loss of a safe place, can lead to a discussion of personal boundaries and safety; learning about the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising can be connected with a discussion of self-defense that can include one's right to defend oneself in a harassment or assault situation; and a pre-bar/bat mitzvah age group can question what it means to become a "Jewish man" or a "Jewish woman." The same energy, creativity, and thoughtfulness that we put into programs for youth on anti-Semitism or Israel can be put it into programs on self-esteem and communication, on tolerance and on respect for each other.

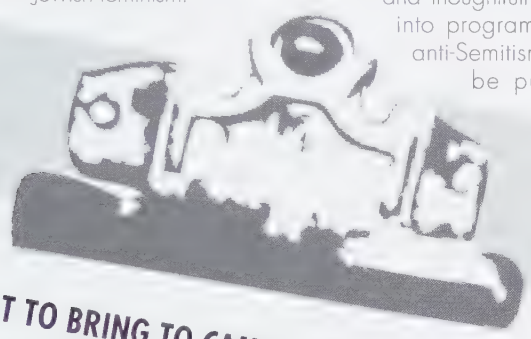
2. Ask questions. People who care about camps, such as parents or alumni, can have a major impact on camps. You can voice your concerns openly to the administration and to camp committee or board members. All of these parties can be influenced—show them you are concerned, speak to other camp parents or concerned alumni, and encourage campers to to speak up at camp. Ask questions:

Staff: Who is in charge? Are there women administrators? Is there comprehensive staff training? Are areas like sexism, detection of child abuse, and eating disorders covered? Who are the counselors and how are they chosen? Are they appropriate role models?

Programming: Are the religious observances at camp egalitarian? Is there differential treatment, especially in traditionally sex-linked activities (are the boys forced to do sports while the girls are excused?) What kind of programming goes on—is it explicitly sexist or homophobic? Is there any feminist programming?

Socially: What kind of social pressures and social situations are there at camp? Are there dances in which ten year olds are encouraged to bring dates? How do they deal with dating? Are condoms available to older campers or counselors?

3. Parents: try to identify counselors who support your vision and encourage them. Show your appreciation for the feminist counselors who are out there in the trenches and in the bunks. Checkout our suggestions for feminist materials to bring to camp on visiting day (along with the picnic basket and homemade brownies) or to send to your favorite camper or counselor.



WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP: A Feminist Checklist

- ☑ *The New Our Bodies Ourselves*, by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (Touchstone Books, Simon Schuster, 1992).
- ✓ *Miriam's Well: Rituals for Jewish Women Around the Year*, by Penina Adelman (Biblio Press, 1992).
- ☑ *Preparing for Sabbath*, (a novel with great camp scenes) by Nessa Rapoport (Biblio Press, 1989).
- ☑ *Don't Bet On The Prince: Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England*, (for bedtime stories!) by Jack Zipes (Routledge, 1987).
- ✓ *Womens Glibber: State of the Art Women's Humor* (a little light bunk reading) edited by Roz Warren (Crossing Press, 1992).
- ✓ *Half the Kingdom* (a documentary film focusing on several Jewish feminists) available from Direct Cinema Limited, 1-800 525-0000. Comes with a study guide written by Susan Weidman Schneider. They also carry other films with Jewish feminist themes.
- ✓ Copies of LILITH Magazine. Order a special Camp Selection of back issues, useful for camp programming for $15 from LILITH Magazine, 250 W 57th St. Suite 2432, NY, NY 10107, (212) 757-0818.

Hadar Dubowsky is an alumna of Barnard College and a variety of summer camps. This summer she can be found in the arts and crafts room at Habonim Dror Machane Galil *in Ottsville, Pennsylvania.*

KOL ISHAH

continued from page 5

"Hate Issues are Hot Now," says TV producer

The lowest rated network television series this spring season was the first one ever to examine the negative impact of the "Jewish-American-Princess" stereotype on young women. Fox's "Class of '96" confronted its freshmen with a spate of "JAP" jokes at fictional Havenhurst College. For "Jessica Cohen," the anti-Semitism revealed by her classmates became a catalyst for her to explore her Jewish identity—helped by the female Hillel rabbi, and by another Jewish woman who'd originally scorned Jessica for being wealthy—and to assert herself against the perpetrators.

"Class of '96" writers dealt with negative stereotypes of the Jewish woman as a top priority early in its first season because "'JAP-bashing' is a hate issue and hate issues are hot now," according to co-producer John Romano. "College campuses are places where horrible ideas can be openly discussed, and so students can open their mouths and be shot down. Prejudice kept secret is far more dangerous."

After the March airing of this episode, called "The Best Little Frat House at Havenhurst," *TV Guide* persisted in calling Jessica a "Jewish American Princess" even while putting the program on its "Save Our Shows" endangered quality programs list. Computer bulletin boards around the country lit up with males decrying "politically correct cant" and protesting not the JAP slur but the program's negative stereotyping of exclusionary fraternities (which on the show had been the hotbed of anti-Semitism and misogyny).

LILITH plans to use clips from the segment of "Class of '96" in ongoing workshops at campuses and at summer camps—as one example of how to combat the pernicious "JAP" stereotype. Too bad the reward for Jessica's spunk is a date with a non-Jewish man.

—Nora Mandel

continued on page 36

continued from page 11

culties there. But first of all we are Jews. *Kashrut* is important. Even more important, though, we want to get on the road to *Eretz Yisrael* to be true Jews in *Eretz Yisrael*. At this time, we are still in transit, we don't know exactly what we are doing.

[A few days later] they said to us, "Today you are going to *Eretz Yisrael*" *(she takes in a deep breath, laughing, smiling)*. This was a very moving moment.

To the Promised Land

We spent the day in the hotel putting things in order. Then they took us to the plane. There were four of us. Four blacks *(laughs)*. After we took off, it quickly became night, darkness. We wondered how we would see *Eretz Yisrael*. It was really dark when the plane began to land. In another few minutes it would be landing. We could hear people speaking in all kinds of languages, English, for one. They said we would be landing soon.

I looked outside. I saw the lights on the landing gear. It was really something. We saw the *magen David* [star of David], emblem of Israel. So that's all. We were done. It was over. We didn't look back. What can I tell you? To feel that you're in a Jewish land, the land of Israel. It was a proud feeling. We forgot what we had been through, what we had suffered, everything we had gone through, how hard it was.

When we landed, there was a translator waiting for us. He said, "You'll be studying here and living here. There are places to learn Hebrew, different places to live." We told him we had been studying in Ethiopia and that we wanted to continue here. . . . He told us there were all kinds of learning opportunities there. "You'll manage in Be'ersheva," he told us.

Kessaye (on right) with her Mother's Group at Mabuie Absorption Center, Be'ersheva, Israel.

Three generations of Ethiopian immigrants at home in their trailer in Be'ersheva, Israel.

On that same night, they sent us in a small car someplace. There was a house. . . . They said, "This is it. This is *Eretz Yisrael*. This is your home."

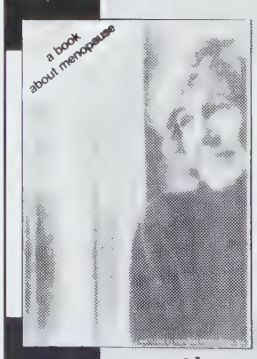
The next morning I got up from the bed. I want to see already what there is and what I see is nothing. When I went out to see the place, I said, "How can this be *Eretz Yisrael*?" It was so bare and dry. I saw some of the same people that I know now. One relative of mine, a woman, wept and cried out and kissed me.

Then, at last, I really began to be like an *olah hadasha* [new immigrant], to understand both the good and the bad. It's not that you have milk and honey but at least it is possible to see the good things and also the things that are not so nice.

Kessaye tells me this story a week before Passover, when we read the story of the Exodus from Egypt. "How fitting for all we were talking about," *she notes. In fact, the only precedent in Jewish history for such a large scale emigration as Operation Moses is the Exodus itself, 3000 years earlier. The Passover Haggadah tells us: In every generation, a person must see her/himself as one coming out of Egypt.*

Kessaye Tevajieh *now lives in Be'ersheva with Addis, a strong and healthy Aliza, and daughter Leora and son Rakhamim, both born in Israel. She currently works as an interpreter and counselor for Ethiopian mothers in labor and delivery at Ben Gurion Hospital.*

Penina V. Adelman *is a writer and social worker in Massachussetts. She is the author of* Miriam's Well *and of a forthcoming children's Bible.*



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S·E·P·A·

A Havdalah *Ritual for when a Marriag*

Naomi, one member of our Jewish women's group, asked us for a ceremony to mark her separation from her husband Joseph. Naomi and Joseph [their names have been changed here] had been married for nineteen years, and in the past several years conflicts between them had escalated to the point where Naomi felt that it was not possible for her to continue in the marriage. She chose to mark the occasion of their moving to separate residences with a ceremony.

For six years, the Princeton Rosh Hodesh Group had been meeting regularly to mark *Rosh Hodesh*, the beginning of each month of the Hebrew calendar. We create and participate in new rituals, particularly to help each another make life transitions of all kinds.

Linda Oppenheimer, Shoshana Silber, and myself created the ceremony. I had spoken with Naomi at length about many aspects of her decision, and I drew on this knowledge in preparing the ceremony. She herself did not participate in constructing the ritual, except to let me know that she was open to whatever our creativity produced.

We took a long time developing the themes and symbols that we finally used here, and many ideas were discarded in the process. Ultimately, though our ceremony was held on a Sunday evening, we chose to use and reinterpret the symbols of *havdalah* [the ceremony marking the end of the Sabbath]—the wine, the spices, and the candles—along with a plant, to enable Naomi to mark this transition to a new phase of her life.

About twelve of us gathered in a living room to conduct the ceremony, which took about an hour and a half. I served as the leader, with everyone taking part. It was a moving experience for all of us, and we reproduce it here for other women's groups to use or adapt.

What's needed:

- 2 candles and 2 separate candlesticks
- fireproof bowl
- wine and cups for all
- fragrance: pine branch, potpourri, flowers, etc. (We used fragrant wood chips.)
- very small natural objects such as bark, leaves, pine needles, stones, clay (We set all these out on a coffee table and they looked quite pretty.)
- a plant (We used a flowering cyclamen, which was blooming in Israel at the time the ceremony took place; ivy is another good choice.)
- a nice ceramic pot with a hole in the bottom for drainage
- potting soil and a trowel
- newspaper to protect the table
- matches
- basin and a pitcher of water
- copies of the ceremony text for all (We gave Naomi a copy that contained only the blessings she was to say aloud.)

We began with an abbreviated *Ma'ariv* (Evening) service so that another member of the group could say *Kaddish* for her daughter. We used the new Reconstructionist prayer book, *Kol Ha'Neshamah*, choosing from it Marcia Falk's alternative *Amidah*, from which we selected poems and blessings. We sang the blessings in Hebrew and English, using Faith Rogow's tune for "As We Bless." (This tune is on her tape "The Courage to Dare.") The readings introduced the themes of endings, separation, and death, setting the tone for the ceremony that followed.

We sang a simple *niggun* [a tune without words], written by me, which was meant to be wistful, sad, a little joyous, and was a kind of comforting lullaby when sung softly and slowly.

Lighting two candles, we poured wine for all, and recited three blessings together:

We praise You, Source of Life, for the wine that helps heal our wounds and points to future joys. (We drank the wine.)

We praise You, Source of Life, for the fragrance that enables us to savor pleasant memories of shared experiences. (We passed around the fragrant wood chips.)

We praise You, Source of Life, for the flame that lights the direction to the future, guiding us on new paths. (The flames of the two candles were held together for the blessing, and separated afterward.)

Naomi read these blessings aloud:

Blessed is the One who separates and makes distinctions.

Blessed is the One who guided me to join my husband under the huppah *[marriage canopy].*

Blessed is the One who enabled us to bring our children into the world.

Blessed is the One who sheltered us in our home.

Blessed is the One who has helped me to decide to leave this marriage.

Blessed is the One who separates and makes distinctions.

This part was very difficult for Naomi. She said later that she was surprised, and relieved, to realize that she might imagine "the One" as being involved in her decisions to marry and to divorce—she had previously felt solely responsible, and blamed herself for the outcome. We sang the *niggun* again at this point, to give Naomi a chance to collect herself.

We wanted to give Naomi an opportunity to talk about her marriage, to tell

A·T·I·N·G

Comes Apart

its story to the group and to herself. I had included in the ceremony text the prompts listed below so that each of us could help Naomi reconstruct the history of the marriage and reflect on it. I gave a brief introduction to this part of the ritual and then asked the first question. The rest unfolded easily and naturally for about half an hour. Naomi said later that it had felt important for her both to affirm for herself and also to share with us the things that had been positive about the marriage. As a group, we knew more about the pain and frustration that we had seen her experience than about the richness and excitement that had once been present in the relationship.

Question Prompts:

- when you met—what was/is attraction
- courtship and decision to marry
- wedding/early years/birth of children
- moment(s) of greatest joy/sadness
- what has made you most angry
- regret—what you feel you could have done differently
- Jewish life
- turning points—looking back, when were they?
- how have you changed since the beginning of this relationship?
- what do you know now that you wish you had known then?
- other questions

Once we had reached a natural stopping place, each person was asked to choose one of the small natural objects from the table and place it in the ceramic pot. I had earlier asked Naomi to bring something symbolizing her marriage to burn. She brought a copy of her marriage license that she had carried for many years as identification. She placed it in the bowl, along with the fragrant wood chips (which we had blessed earlier), and lit them with both of the candles. We all watched quietly for several minutes while the certificate and the wood chips gradually turned to ash. While everything was burning, Naomi repeated the passage below phrase by phrase after me:

I, Naomi S., affirm that I have chosen, with sorrow and with anger, with regret and with relief, to end my marriage to Joseph B. Before we were joined; as of now, we are separated. Before, we shared our home; now, we live in separate homes. I leave behind me forever my married life with Joseph. I look ahead to a new life for myself, a life that will grow from the sweetness and the bitterness of our marriage.

Blessed is the One who separates and makes distinctions.

Blessed is the One who enables us to make transformations and new beginnings.

This was the emotional climax of the ceremony.

We mixed the ashes of the the marriage certificate and the wood chips with potting soil and the objects in the pot, and we then placed the plant into the soil. I had originally imagined that Naomi would do this herself, but members of the group very spontaneously did it for her, and Naomi said later that it comforted her to have people take care of her in this way.

We ended by chanting our opening *niggun* again as we moved to a larger open space in another part of the room. We all stood in a close circle, with Naomi in the center. We had planned to do a kind of "trust fall," in which a person is literally handed from and supported by one person after another around the circle. Instead, we found ourselves growing quiet, hugging and slowly rocking Naomi as a group. We gradually stepped back from her, and she hugged each of us individually as we again sang our *niggun* and "As We Bless." We lingered in the spell of the moment, all of us bound together by the moving experience we had shared.

Michael Rappeport

Rosh Hodesh *group in Princeton, New Jersey.*

Ruth Berger Goldston, a member of a Princeton, New Jersey Rosh Hodesh *group, is a psychotherapist and former Chair of the National Havurah Committee.*

REVIEWS

OUT OF THE DEPTHS I CALL YOU: A BOOK OF PRAYERS FOR THE MARRIED JEWISH WOMAN. *Edited and translated by Nina Beth Cardin, Jason Aronson, 1992, $24.95.*

If there is a clear role for *Out of the Depths I Call You,* it is as a heartfelt gift for a newly pregnant friend. This elegant, slim volume is an English translation (plus full Hebrew text) of an 18th century Italian woman's prayerbook. Cardin stumbled upon the original (a gold-embossed antiquity dedicated to a woman named Yehudit Kutscher Coen) while wandering around inhaling leather in the Rare Book Room of the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Out of the Depths contains private, not communal, women's prayers, more than half of which pertain (as if they were indeed one lifelong prayer) to childbirth: from a woman's first pre-conception velleity through (many months or years later) her last post-delivery beatitude. Those readers who are mothers might well be stunned by the sheer proportion of prayers in this volume given over to one's fertility calendar.

So, did Yehudit Coen actually use these extremely narrow-application prayers? Like the one to be said when you kiss the mezuzah on those evenings when you are specifically heading out the door to go to the ritual bath, hoping to become pregnant later that night? Coen is instructed to intone Psalm 121 over and over to herself while she walks down the road on her way to the bath; to "earnestly" whisper to herself before engaging in sex (later the same night) a prayer that includes the words "select for me a seed that is pure and holy"; and to recite, finally, this gorgeously spiritual prayer ("God, I cannot stop my lips from praising You") when, as a new mother, she first re-enters synagogue after the baby's birth .

There are even instructions for the childbirth coach: "When a woman attends at the birth of a friend's child she must show great devotion. She cannot allow trivial conversation or an obscene or malicious word . . . She must encourage the woman in labor to make a vow to perform some mitzvah, for example, spinning wool for *tzitzit* [prayershawl fringe], making wicks for use in the synagogue, washing *tallitot* [prayershawls], or being punctilious in observing *Rosh Hodesh* [the new moon]."

We at LILITH earnestly seek the prayer that will enjoin Cardin to return to the Rare Book Room posthaste for more intoxication.

THE BIG LIE: A TRUE STORY. *Isabella Leitner, Scholastic, 1992, $13.95.*

If it's time for your child's first Holocaust book, *The Big Lie,* recommended for ages 8 through 11, is a good choice. Anchored, warm, even a tad dull, Leitner's steady, reassuring voice hides none of the brute facts: as a Hungarian-Jewish teenager, she is put in a cattle car, sent to Auschwitz, and confronted regularly with Mengele's "selections." She endures a winter's death march, and discovers, after the war, that two of her sisters and her mother have been murdered.

Part of what makes this appropriate medicine for children is that the ongoing portrait is never of a young girl *alone*—rather, Leitner is always in the loyal, loving, deeply supportive company of at least three, and sometimes four, of her sisters. Her brother Philip, separated in another part of Auschwitz, risks much in order to sustain his sisters' hope, tenacity, and courage. At one point Philip climbs through a window of the woman's disinfection station at Auschwitz to whisper to his sisters, "Eat whatever they give you, because we must survive. One day we will be free. And we will pay them back. So eat and survive. I love you." At another point the four sisters, who sleep together (with ten other girls) on the top deck of a triple-deck wooden shelf at Auschwitz, mysteriously receive a piece of wood. "You must live. You simply must. I love you," Philip has carved into it.

The simple, uncluttered prose favors details that are almost solace-giving, from a child's-eye view: The girls hide for a short while in an empty doghouse; hungry, they discover delicious cabbage in an abandoned farmhouse; Leitner shleps with her—as she's herded from home to ghetto to cattle car—a favorite transitional object, a beautiful camel's hair coat that she absolutely loves. When Leitner's sister Chicha is forced, by a female Nazi officer, to hold two rocks over her head during roll call, Leitner comments, "Chicha was very brave. She held the rocks high for hours. It was a small victory, but still a victory. Chicha gave all who saw her the courage to carry on." Sensitively calibrating how far pre-adolescents can be emotionally pushed, Leitner chooses, throughout the book, to emphasize the positive: valor, determination, small but meaningful acts of resistance, and, perhaps most reassuringly, family love.

A very spare and simple map of Isabella Leitner's Europe, and an afterword that offers children some fundamental World War II facts round out this respectful book. It's probably not a good idea to just give *The Big Lie* to a child. Read it yourself, and be available to discuss rewardingly its frank, modest, sad material.

THE SECRET IN BUBBIE'S ATTIC. *Produced and written by Eva Grayzel and Suri Levow-Krieger, Ergo Media, 1-800-695-3746, $24.95.*

This adorable 43-minute video (appropriate for the 3 to 10-year-old crowd) gets four stars for Levow-Krieger's original, bouncy, non-sappy holiday songs (they should definitely be released in songbook form), as well as for the kids'-fort, backyard quality of the scenery—cardboard gardens and old-timey *cheders* [Hebrew schools] which look like they were knocked together by fifth graders during arts and crafts.

The acting, by Levow-Kreiger, Grayzel, and a group of real looking children (complete with frizzy hair, baby fat and gap-teeth), is earnest, amateurish and totally charming. Grayzel is a high-spirited, engaging storyteller, and Levow-Krieger is completely winning as a very

camp Bubbie, as well as a high-*shund* impoverished Galitzianer widow who delivers her kvetchy lines while looking up, babushka-coiffed, from a severely mal-proportioned tag-board window. For *haimish* charm, you can't beat this.

The story? A group of contemporary American children inadvertantly discover and unleash a Jewish genie from a suitcase in Bubbie's attic. The genie (played by Grayzel) turns out to tell great stories—of a beautiful cloth, of the rabbi from Nemerov, of a miniature Torah scroll which saves the lives of two Holocaust children, of a would-be shofar blower, of two boys (twins) who build a *sukkah*, and of some bebop Maccabees.

The very painful flip side of one's delight in watching this video is that it is hyper-correctively non-feminist. Here we have two highly talented women, Grayzel and Levow-Krieger, cross-dressed through almost the entire film! Every one of the significant roles—from suburban rabbi to shofar-blower to farmer to scribe to tailor to student—are male, and most of them are played by females! It's distressingly bizarre. One wonders why these parts (all of them, actually) were not written for females. Why does the intrepid attic-explorer role go to a boy,

while a girl entering the attic gets the dismal line, "All these cobwebs—my dress is getting dirty"?

Adult female roles are reduced to three walk-ons: Levow-Kreiger's 30-second Bubbie; the cameo Galitzianer widow; and a mother whose entire scene consists of the line "Oy!" delivered to a noisy son. It's bad enough to have, in real Jewish life, men who exclude women from significant roles—but why would two talented women conspire in this too?

Regardless, do show this delightful film to your children and/or classes, but offer, as running commentary, a feminist deconstruction. And don't loan the film to anyone who doesn't promise to do the same. Grayzel and Levow-Kreiger, you have so many gifts, how you could so forsake us?

—Susan Schnur

"I USED TO WANT TO BE MISS CALIFORNIA"

SHAYNA MAIDELS: ORTHODOX TEENAGE GIRLS. *Produced by Lisa Kors, Box 325, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, (213) 933-4305, 24 minutes.*

After a few minutes of arguing with her father about why she won't buy him non-kosher yogurt, Sinaia rolls her eyes in a typical adolescent manner and asks "Which is more important, my spirituality or your yogurt?"

Shayna Maidels: Orthodox Teenage Girls, a short documentary by filmmaker Lisa Kors, is packed with dramatic snapshots of the lives of newly Orthodox teenage girls from Yeshiva University's Girls' School in Los Angeles. In one scene, a mother says tearfully, "they've taken her away from me," while in another the camera focuses in on a young woman *davening*, her prayer book resting against the boy's varsity jacket she is wearing.

In this short film, teenage Jewish girls, a nearly undocumented population, speak for themselves. By turning to Orthodoxy, these articulate and animated young women are challenging societal and parental expectations, including those of feminist mothers. In one scene, a girl argues with her feminist mother about the importance of *kashrut*, and then says, to her mother's dismay, that she believes that going to college and working are secondary to doing "what God wants." Still, the film does not allow the viewer to slip into a simplified assumption that the turn to Orthodoxy is an automatic anti-feminist backlash. One of the girls, holding a glittering tiara in her hand, says: "I used to want to be Miss California. . . now I believe for women to be full people we shouldn't be treated as objects."

The film has won awards including best of New England Film Festival and Silver Apple for the National Educational Film Festival. This animated and moving profile of newly Orthodox young Jewish women as they face a turning point in their lives, struggle to find their place in the world and give meaning to their lives, makes a great jumping off point for group discussions for Jewish professionals, Hebrew school classes and Jewish women's groups.

—Hadar Dubowsky

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMAZONS: WOMEN WARRIORS FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE MODERN ERA. *Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Doubleday, 1991, $12.*

Looking for baby names, pet names or a new name? For some refreshing ideas, try Jessica Amanda Salmonson's *Encyclopedia of Amazons.* This little book is packed with more than a thousand names of powerful women, warrior goddesses, female pirates and other heroic female combatants. Give your daughter, your cat or yourself a name with that Amazon touch. Choose from unfamiliar and overlooked wonderful Jewish gems such as Meyalleleth ["The Howling One," a Hebrew version of Hecate], Ornoskelis [a Hebraic wind-spirit who waged war against King Solomon] Igrat (identified by kabbalists as the Lust and Warrior demoness), or Naamah (named by Safed Kabbalists as, in addition to Lilith, one of Adam's two demon wives). And, for Lilith followers and fans, the book contains lists of ancient Hebrew demon-queens, either friends or rivals of Lilith. A unique and fabulous baby shower gift.

—H. D.

In **RUNNING FIERCELY TOWARD A HIGH THIN SOUND**, by Judith Katz (Firebrand Books, Ithaca, NY, 1992), a Jewish lesbian, ostracized by her family and forbidden to attend her sister's wedding, hides in the holy ark during the nuptial cermony:

LOOK CLOSELY. Does the light flicker oddly from within the Holy Ark? Is there a woman pressed in between the Torah scrolls? What is she doing? What does she want? Is she hugging the Torah scrolls or pissing on them? Eating them word by holy word, phrase by contentious phrase? She could be a member of this wedding, march down the aisle in a once-in-a-lifetime dress, hold her own personal bridesmaid bouquet, if only she could find it within herself to cut her hair put a layer of pancake make-up around her purple scar agree to dance the hootchy-cootchy and do the twist if only if only if only. But I am Nadine Pagan, a tough cookie to crack, a rough nut to crumble. I will never settle for basic black and a simple strand of pearls, I'd only look like a broken down velveteen chair, stuffing falling out of me. Not this Nadine Pagan. I remain hidden, never speak even when spoken to, joyless at the celebration of our own sister's wedded bliss. This Nadine Pagan has fallen overboard. This Nadine this Nadine this Nadine is nothing if not hidden watching from the wings, studying firsthand and up close the lush satin and velvet robes of the Torahs, the sparkling silver crowns and breastplates, how I wish the rabbi would open the Ark, take me out and cradle me in his rabbinical arms, walk with me among the congregants to be kissed and blessed and blessed and kissed, how I wish someone would hold me up on the bima, untie me, unravel me, read my wisdom and stories out loud, bring blessings one to the other from inside of me, the holy teachings of Nadine, my own code of ethical love.

SLOW FIRE. *Susan Neiman, Schocken Books, 1992, $23.*

Slow Fire is the story of the author's years as a philosophy graduate student in Berlin from 1982 to 1988. Her anecdotes humorous and harrowing, are full of the urgency of a young Jewish American woman's search for signs of *Vergangenheitsverarbeitung* [working through the past,] as she studies life in the schools, streets, *kneipen* [cafes] and Turkish markets, and in the homes and synagogues of West and East Berlin.

Germans react to her in surprising ways. One wide-eyed friend asks of life in America, "How does it feel to live in a country without castles?" Another woman, wanting to equate Nazis and Zionists, says to Neiman, "There are no typical Jewish qualities. . . . Do you know there are even blond Jews!" One of the most discomfitting comments comes as a guilt-ridden confession from her non-Jewish German lover: "Every time I see you I think of Dachau." Neiman's candid reporting does not insulate these confrontations; their force assaults the reader.

Slow Fire is as much about Neiman's observations of others as it is about her own growing sense of Jewish identity. Early optimism as a student ("people are trying to come to terms with their history here") dims when she marries and then has a child. Neiman and her husband must struggle to create a place for themselves in Berlin as a Jewish family. An attempt at a Sabbath dinner for her German-Jewish friends, survivors of Auschwitz, is received with disdain: "In the camps, the believers were lost." The landlord tears down Neiman's family's *mezuzah*, forcing them to defend themselves in court. Neiman and her husband entertain the thought of opening a Jewish center in Berlin, but cease their reveries when faced with the question, "for whom?"

The word *verarbeitung* is defined as "manufacturing; digestion; thorough study; working out; working over." Careful not to draw reductive conclusions about her experiences in Berlin, Neiman is constantly in a process of *verarbeitung*. What she realizes she misses the most, however, is laughter; it has been absent from her life in Berlin because, "jokes, more than most things, depend on shared premises." Neiman writes of a play she helps put on for a predominantly Jewish audience: "Fine, low, melancholy Jewish laughter. . . the sweetest second was the one when I heard the first laughter, and I knew we had done something right."

Neiman's philosophical perspective greatly enriches *Slow Fire*. Her ability to frame her experiences with regard to past German philosophers lends an irony to her writing. From the start, Neiman clearly states that "classical logic won't show you fallacy." Nevertheless, it is only after her journey that Neiman comes to write, "[In Berlin] there are no conclusions, no heroes, no [Kantian] law. Even the enemy can be so hard to find."

—Kathy Sillman

ARE YOU SICK? HOW TO BEAT THE EVIL EYE

From **THE MERIT OF OUR MOTHERS: A BILINGUAL ANTHOLOGY OF JEWISH WOMEN'S PRAYERS** *(Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, 1992, $16.95)* come these 19th century instructions:

Extinguishing Coals as an Incantation Against the Ayin Hore *[evil eye]:*

The sick person should inhale the fumes from nine different colors of woolen clothing and should extinguish the glowing coals in fresh water three times, count backwards from nine to one, and wash the face and both pulses of the heart. Then, he should drink three times from the water which was used to extinguish the coals and scatter the coals to the four corners of the room. The remaining water should be poured out the door leading to the outside of the house. Hashem yisborekh *[God] will surely send a complete healing.*

HOT CHICKEN WINGS. *Jyl Lynn Felman, Aunt Lute, 1992, $8.95.*

This eclectic collection of stories by lesbian feminist writer Jyl Lynn Felman is funny, painful, revealing, and very Jewish. As they explore what it means to be a woman and a Jew, Felman's stories cover a lot of ground, exposing rabid anti-Semitism (sometimes in the form of Jewish self-hatred), exploring sexuality, and embracing the joys of Jewish family life. "The Forbidden," Felman's introductory piece, strongly articulates her political views: "Ask me about the cost of white-skinned privilege and Jewish invisibility. I seek recognition and dialogue from assimilated, religious, secular, culturally identified and politically active gay and lesbian Jews; straight, heterosexual mainstream Jews; white gentiles; the working class; women and men of color; Israelis and Palestinians."

The narrator of Felman's chilling "Absence" grows up assimilated in prewar Germany, where her parents embrace the Church and send her to Catholic school, despite their Jewishness. Two of her wealthy aunts remain Jewish: *Sometimes I saw them carrying freshly slaughtered chickens under their arms. They always carried their own chickens, Mother said, because they did not trust their cooks to walk the extra mile to the kosher butcher. Later I laughed under my breath at those*

two women, all dressed up in fine, black leather gloves, and white silk blouses with lace sleeves, carrying bleeding chickens down der Hauptstrasse. *They always held their heads so high. I wondered when I was young what they were looking at, all the way up there.*

In the title story, eating *treyf* chicken wings serves as a metaphor for having a lesbian encounter; "Crisis" pits a Jewish lesbian against a gentile therapist who displays outrageous ignorance of her client's Jewish background.

The twelve stories in this well-written collection enervate and unnerve the reader, making her painfully aware of the disparities and the connections—sources of great literary tension—which exist among Jews today.

—Molly Abramowitz

SOMEDAY SONGS: POEMS TOWARD A PERSONAL HISTORY. *Rochelle Ratner, art by Bernard Solomon, BkMk Press, University of Missouri, 1992, $9.50.*

The poems in Rochelle Ratner's latest collection center mainly on Jewish life cycle events, rituals, and family, as well as on friendship, love, and spiritual quest.

Ratner artfully probes shifts in Jewish family traditions, as in "Rosh Hashanah Meal:" *There's challah of course/but Ann slices it/in the kitchen/and nobody blesses it pea soup/not the usual chicken/with matzoh balls/Is this the way you live /now, Grandpa.*

In the section called "The Shohet [ritual slaughterer]" the rabbi arrives to examine the knives in accordance with the laws of *kashrut*. Satisfied that there are no nicks or rust, he accepts from the *shohet* a few beef tongues as presents. Ratner wryly observes, "He wears God on his face but it itches him."

Painful and witty, these are genuine, unaffected, nourishing poems.

—M. A.

MY JEWISH FACE & OTHER STORIES. *Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1990, $9.95.*

"See how you like my face, see how you like my Jewish-looking face,'" pronounces one character in Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz's *My Jewish Face*, and the statement is as much confession as challenge. In a collection of stories spanning years of political activism and personal observation, Kaye/Kantrowitz examines what it means to have a Jewish face or a Jewish heart in the midst of so many other conflicting loyalties.

If *My Jewish Face* reflects a particularly political strain of our emerging Jewish women's tradition, it is largely because of the relentless honesty of Kaye/Kantrowitz's characters. These women are urban ("In the beginning was a sidewalk and then a tree broke through"), they are lesbian ("I can't be friends with someone straight until we talk about it"), they are idealistic or jaded, and they speak their doubts and fears freely. Characters learn to speak up—to shout, and what they are saying is often *we are not the privileged minority you think we are.*

While stories like "Dance on the Face of the Earth" and "Runaway Bunny" are entertaining and often moving, the heart of *My Jewish Face* is Kaye/Kantrowitz's political commentary. In a dual piece entitled "War Stories: 197-," she explores the choices facing women in an awakening world of feminist rage. In "The Day We Didn't Declare War," a group of women contemplates and ultimately rejects taking the law into their own hands to end the attacks of a serial rapist. These women idolize those who have fought back in the past, but cannot bring themselves to take similar action. "And I feel a little ashamed," the piece concludes, "like maybe my freedom, such as it is, is getting staked on someone else's bold, daring, perhaps imprisoned back."

But Kaye/Kantrowitz cannot let the issues rest with this. "Maybe it happened this way. Maybe a couple of us had studied self-defense intensively, and three of us had guns. . . . " In "The Day We Did," the second half of "War Stories," Kaye/Kantrowitz's characters do take the law into their own hands. And the rapes stop.

Kantrowitz's voice is humorous, with a light touch on the most painful of subjects. And, no matter what the subject, it is always distinctly Jewish. In the pair of stories that conclude the collection, entitled "All Weekend No One Mentions Israel" and "In the Middle of the Barbeque She Brings up Israel," the author makes her most pointed political commentary on the anguished issue of American Jews' torn loyalties to Israel in the age of the Intifada.

"She wants the world to be nice, like we taught her, but we lied," the narrator comments of a young and idealistic Jewish woman.

We never showed her the world's true face, the one we saw, the one we believe in—I could call it Hitler's face but it's all the faces who liked Hitler, who chose Hitler, millions of them and nobody stopped it. Take care of your own, chickie, *I want to warn, even though she is right this minute spouting words we taught her,* equal, peace, justice, swords into ploughshares. . . . *No one knows what to say to Nadine, not even Marjorie. That it's okay to beat ploughshares into swords?*

The process of being a Jew and an American and a woman is Kaye/Kantrowitz's subject. Her language is the relaxed language of the conversationalist—she does not purport to be a prose stylist, and her stories often read like essays—but her pieces are rivetingly political, intensely fun, liberating, painful, and undeniably real.

—Rachel Kadish

HER SHARE OF THE BLESSINGS: WOMEN'S RELIGIONS AMONG PAGANS, JEWS, AND CHRISTIANS IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD. *Ross Shepard Kraemer, Oxford University Press, 1992, $24.95.*

What if these scenes were a part of our tradition?

"On his deathbed, Job has distributed his earthly goods to his sons, whereupon his three daughters complain. He assures them that their inheritance is a finer one, and gives them each mysterious, indescribable shining bands. When they complain that such bands cannot sustain their lives, Job counters that not only will the bands sustain them, they will lead the women to life in the heavens. Wrapping themselves in the bands, the daughters chant angelic hymns. . . . "

"The feast is shared by women also, most of them aged virgins, who have kept their chastity not under compulsion, like some of the Greek priestesses, but of their own free will in their ardent yearning for wisdom. Eager to have her [wisdom] for their life mate, they have spurned the pleasures of the body and desire no mortal offspring, but only those immortal children which only the soul that is dear to God can bring to the birth unaided. . . . "

Feminist fantasy? Not according to Ross Shepard Kraemer and other feminist historians. These quotes, though little known, *are* a part of our tradition. Taken from accounts of Jews in Greco-Roman antiquity, they are part of what some scholars point to as mounting evidence of female agency in early Judaism. Traditional scholarship has frequently ignored or overlooked the occasional evidence that

women once had more than a passive role in communal religious life. But hundreds-of-years-old synagogue inscriptions show that a female community leader was not unheard of in a Greco-Roman synagogue.

Kraemer brings evidence from these early inscriptions as well as from contemporary accounts of Jewish women who seem to have escaped the child-bearing pressures of Roman aristocratic society by escaping to a monastic life. Such evidence affords us a tantalizing glimpse of what may have been written out of history.

Of course this sort of reconstructive scholarship can only offer us hypotheses. "As I have indicated," Kraemer reminds us, "whether the text reflects the actual behavior of some Jewish women we can only surmise." Evidence is sparse and often inconclusive, and this can be frustrating for those of us who want definitive history. This frustration defines a central problem of women's historical scholarship: in a tradition which has documented only male-centered activities, we simply do not have written evidence of much of women's history.

Nevertheless it *is* remarkable what Kraemer is able to reconstruct for us—visions of women's instrumental roles in early Judaism, Christianity, and paganism, a chapter detailing "Heresy as Women's Religion: Women's Religion as Heresy," and so on. *Her Share of the Blessings* is an important scholarly book, and a valuable contribution to our modern myth of the past. Perhaps when we have decades of reconstructive feminist scholarship behind us, the history of women's place in our early tradition will become still more definitive.

—R. K.

FOLLOW MY FOOTPRINTS: CHANGING IMAGES OF WOMEN IN AMERICAN JEWISH FICTION. *Sylvia Barack Fishman, ed., Brandeis University Press, 1992, $45 cloth, $24.95 paper.*

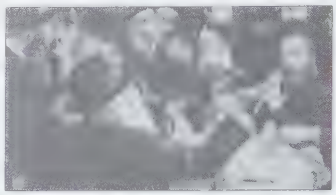
At last, the book that begins to piece together a literary tradition by and about Jewish women. In *Follow My Footprints*, Sylvia Barack Fishman gathers together in one volume many of the sources that shape the way we perceive ourselves and the way the world perceives us.

Beginning with "The Eastern European Milieu" and moving on to modern America, *Follow My Footprints* effectively covers the development of the sometimes-championed and often maligned icon that is the American Jewish Woman. Fishman's introduction, which gives a brief history of women's posi-

A PEEPHOLE INTO THE WORLD OF ULTRA-ORTHODOX MEN

A beautifully written, engaging ethnographic study, **DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH: INSIDE ULTRA-ORTHODOX JEWRY** [Schocken Books, NY, 1992, $27.50 hardcover, $18.00 paper] might better have been subtitled "Inside *Half* of Ultra-Orthodox Jewry." The author, Samuel Heilman, an American "modern-Orthodox" anthropologist, takes us as far as he can in observing this insular community which maintains strict rules of gender segregation. In the following excerpt, Beryl, a rather typical man about to be married, shares his ignorance and fears of sex:

. . . Among most haredim *[ultra-Orthodox Jews], knowledge about sexual matters and even the basic facts of life, are limited until just before marriage. . . . Too important a task to be left just to parents, sexual initiation is something* haredim *have assigned to special counselors. Men for men and women for women.*



Beryl knew little of sexual functioning. Even as a boy he had not talked about these matters. When he had nocturnal emissions, he said nothing, but rather secretly believed that he had a problem of bed-wetting and chose rather to leave the matter unspoken. . . .

He had heard vaguely about sexual intercourse but "I was sure that it was something that goyim *(and people who wanted to be like* goyim*) did. I could never imagine that something so animal-like and coarse would be done by* erlicher Yidn *[virtuous Jews]."*

*"[*The counselor*] began by telling me that what he was about to describe was going to shock me, but nevertheless I should not be frightened because it was not at all something bad—if I learned what to do. He told me that what he would tell me to do was something that I was not the first to do. Before me, Adam, the first man, had done it. He told me that our patriarch Abraham did it, and so too Isaac and Jacob. He told me that all virtuous and pure* zaddikim [especially pious men] *did it. He told me my father did it and that he himself did it. And then he told me that even the rebbe, may he live many long years, amen, did it.*

> "While moving towards sexual climax, it's ideal to recite the names of the generations from Adam through the twelve sons of Jacob"

"And when he said this I knew I too would have to do it. Still, I wasn't really sure what it was. But I'll tell you, when he finally told me what it was that I would have to do, I was in shock."

. . .When at last the married couple was ready to begin, [continued the counselor], *in the stillness of the night, the room should be darkened. Neither was to see the other naked—for to do so would make them no different than dogs. In this sacred moment, each had to guard the modesty of the other. Special garments should be set aside for the purpose. Then, under the blankets, they would slowly raise these pajamas—no more than necessary—and in silence complete their holy coming together.*

. . . If Beryl could, he should recite the names of the generations from Adam through the twelve sons of Jacob while he was moving toward climax. This might become difficult, but Beryl should persevere, for it was a good way of disciplining his passions.

Beryl should not think there was no room for feeling here. "There is no joining together of a man and woman that is not preceded by hugging and kissing," but certainly the kisses should "only be on the lips or face, and not, Heaven forbid, anywhere else." Such displays were meant to make his wife feel good and arouse the love between them. But of course there was no doubt that too much of this was not good, for it diminished their sense of the sanctity of the act.

When they were finished, the woman should turn toward the left, and then after about half an hour, he could leave her and return to his bed, but not before they had each ritually washed their hands.

tion in Jewish culture and religion, is a quick and effective orientation to the world of Jewish women's representation.

The anthology brings us immediately to the literature that is the heart of many of our cultural myths: the self-sacrificing mother of Yiddish literature, portrayed either in halcyon tones as in the excerpt from Sholem Asch's *Three Cities* or with a bitter realism as in I. L. Peretz's short stories. In the selections that follow, we see these heroic images of Jewish womanhood transformed through the wrenching adaptation to American life into images of the Jewish American Princess and her domineering mother, images of grabbing, materialistic, or over-protective women.

Follow My Footprints documents the problematic representations of Jewish women by Jewish male authors, but the anthology is far more than a retrospective of what has been written by Jewish men about Jewish women. The final sections of the anthology, featuring fiction by women struggling with Jewish themes in a modern world, are a triumph of Jewish women's agency. Here we encounter Gloria Goldreich and Ruth Knafo Setton. Rebecca Goldstein, Cynthia Ozick, and other contemporary writers who are now, for the first time in our tradition, speaking openly as Jewish women—a feat that has taken us many years and much struggle to accomplish.

Despite the fact that Fishman has done a wonderful job of rounding up previously uncollected works, the format of an anthology carries with it its own limitations. Excerpts, while chosen to highlight representations of Jewish women, are not always from the most pivotal or coherent parts of the larger works they represent, and so the most satisfying segments of the anthology are those in which works appear in their entirety. Fishman's mini-introductions before each excerpt are, likewise, not always as strong as they could be, and the overly directive titles she assigns some excerpts (eg. "Princess Brenda Fixes Life" or "Jewish Mother Par Excellence" for pieces from larger works that have perfectly good titles of their own) are intrusive and at times border on kitschy.

Follow My Footprints, nonetheless, is an essential tool in every American Jew's education. If you haven't read the predecessors of Woody Allen's Jewish Mother imagery, if you haven't read Tillie Olsen or Grace Paley, or if you want to know why people get so worked up about Philip Roth's depictions of Jewish women, sit down with a copy of this anthology. Some of what you will read is great literature, some of it is "classic" only because of the times and lives it represents, but all of it has a message. Reading Fishman's anthology is the equivalent of taking a college course in a subject that was never taught when most of us were in college.

Not only does *Follow My Footprints* fill a gaping hole in our collective education, but it is a milestone in the legitimization of literature on and by Jewish women.

—R. K.

THE JEWISH WOMEN'S AWARENESS GUIDE: CONNECTIONS FOR THE SECOND WAVE OF JEWISH FEMINISM. *The New Woman Collective, Biblio Press, 1992, $7.95.*

What is your first Jewish memory? Growing up, what messages did you get about appropriate work for Jews and non-Jews? What messages did you get about intermarriage? Do you remember how you were expected to behave at family meals? Did the women in your family work and were they paid for what they did? If you could give one gift to your mother, what would it be?

These are some of the questions posed in the *Jewish Women's Awareness Guide*, a how-to manual for forming a Jewish women's group, which aims to provide a context and a "starter kit" for Jewish women to come together and begin to discuss questions of how Jewish women relate to money, class, and authority, how we see our jobs and our religion and our studies and our families, how we deal with sexuality and relationships. The guide provides exercises which will be relevant to women of all age groups and with a variety of life experiences, and gives a brief overview of the woman's position in traditional Judaism. Also included is a history of the Jewish women's movement from the beginning of its differentiation from the larger women's movement in America.

Acknowledging that the women who form a group may at first be complete strangers, the Guide provides an opening through which participants can learn to share their commonalities and differences. Find a few friends—or complete strangers—and begin comparing notes on what it means to be a Jewish woman. *The Jewish Women's Awareness Guide* is both a wonderful starting point for anyone who is not sure where exactly to begin, whether in a college setting or a community gathering, and an excellent reference for those who already have some experience in women's awareness groups.

—R. K.

"A sensitive account of a *ba'alot teshuvah*. . . . A positive, although not naive, picture of religious communities and the 'empty spaces' they are able to fill in some womens' lives."—*Lilith*

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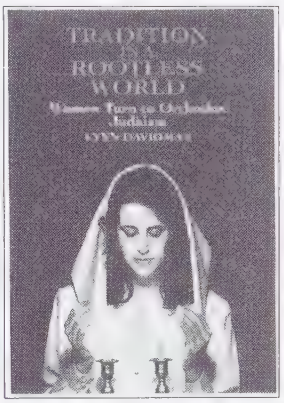

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Israel's Proposed "New Legislation on Human Rights" Neglects Women's Rights

The Knesset Lay and Constitution Committee is at present drafting a "Basic Law: Fundamental Human Rights," which is intended to serve as Israel's constitution. While the law makes excellent provisions to ensure such fundamental rights as freedom of conscience, protection of privacy and the individual's right to life and physical welfare, Section 21 of the draft specifies that "nothing in this basic law will in any way affect matters of prohibition and permission in marriage and divorce."

Israel's women's organizations, including Na'amat, WIZO, the Israel Women's Network, Hadassah/Israel, the Feminist movement, and Women to Women, as well as Agunot and the Association for those Denied Divorce, have joined forces to oppose the law if it contains Section 21.

In Israel, marriage and divorce are under the sole jurisdiction of the religious courts, in which the judges are all men. The law applied is *halakha* [Jewish religious law], which traditionally discriminates against women. Even *halakhic* options which would result in equal treatment are rarely explored and infrequently implemented. Judgements in the courts tend to discriminate against women. For example, the rabbinic courts rarely apply the effective coercive measures needed to persuade a recalcitrant husband to give the *get* [writ of divorce], and no solutions exist for the tragic plight of *agunot,* women whose husbands have disappeared without giving the *get* and who therefore are prevented from ever remarrying or bearing legitimate children.

If Section 21 were not included in the basic law, rabbinic law would be subject to the equality test in matters of marriage and divorce. The exemption of marriage and divorce from the overall criterion of equality weakens any impetus to find solutions within Jewish law for the unequal treatment which many women receive, while, moreover, precluding relief via the civil courts. In sending so clear a message that it is legitimate to exempt marriage and divorce from the inclusive definition of equality which the law would enforce, Section 21 would give constitutional reinforcement to the discrimination women encounter daily in the religious courts. Furthermore, the proposed Basic Law with Section 21 is more harmful to women than the status quo because of the special status the law would enjoy. The Basic Law, in enunciating constitutional principles, serves as an interpretive guideline for judges, and section 21 would grant unprecedented legitimacy to limitation of the equality principle.

The Law and Constitution Committee, composed exclusively of male members of the Knesset, has bowed to pressure from the religious parties, who refuse to support the proposal if it does not include Section 21. Clearly, women's basic freedoms are merely a bargaining chip to the supporters of the law. Inequality in marriage and divorce is the more severe discrimination faced by Israeli women—but the all male Knesset Law and Constitution Committee has decided that waiving women's rights is a "necessary price" to be paid for a constitution.

Israeli women are not willing to take the risk of passing the law with Section 21, which is an inadmissible and unacceptable blemish on an otherwise progressive, liberal and enlightened proposal. The naive approach of the legislators ignores the educational and moral message conveyed by constitutional legislation. Once the law comes into effect, Israel will proudly proclaim that, after 45 years of statehood we finally have constitution—and its failing will go unnoticed. Judges, lawyers, teachers and schoolchildren will learn the law and accept the limits to equality; few will question its legitimacy.

We object to the claim that an incomplete list of rights is better than nothing. Women and their rights must not be used as bargaining chips. The benefits of the law do not outweigh the serious harm to women's rights posed by Section 21. We maintain that it is preferable to delay the passage of a constitution until we can ensure full protection of the fundamental human right of all citizens to determine martial status and to establish a family. It is better to have no law than a bad law.

—Alice Shalvi

Judaica by Women

At ArtSites, a unique cooperative, twenty-nine Jewish artists, mostly women, create Judaica that is being commissioned and sold all over the United States. Using skills that can be traced to their ancestors in Eastern and Central Europe—metalworking, calligraphy, weaving, glass crafting, embroidery, paper cutting and pottery—the artists, working both alone and in collaboration, are developing quality original Judaica *and* educating their clients about Jewish rituals.

Shirely Waxman, a fiber artist, created ArtSites for Jewish artists to band together for support, critiquing and collaboration. Many of the women in the group, she notes, came to their art as a second career, or after years as homemakers. "The group has given these women a sense of purpose, the chance to collaborate with other women, and the ability to find new means of Jewish expression and identification," asserts Waxman.

ArtSites has been invaluable as a way for these Jewish women artists to earn a living by their art. By working in collaboration, artists can learn marketing and promotion skills, and can sell their work more effectively. Says Tava Chansky, an art therapist who works at her pottery part time: "I'm not a business woman. When you're with a group, that aspect of art becomes easier."

But the artists see education as one of their primary missions. Their *chuppot* of hand-painted silk, illuminated *ketubot* in hand-done calligraphy with paper cut borders, ceramic *menorot* and Passover plates, handwoven *tallitot,* silver *kiddush* cups and spiceboxes are finding their way even into homes in which Jewish traditions and rituals hadn't been practiced. People seeking to build Jewish practice into their lives have been drawn to the uniqueness and growing availability of these handcrafted ritual objects. The works of art become a means of return to the rituals themselves.

The artists extend their work by teaching courses in local Jewish Community Centers and museums, focusing not only on the craft but on the ritual and cultural aspects of the artwork; their exhibits across the country include lectures and hands-on demonstrations. A bat or bar mitzvah celebrant who comes in with a parent to buy a *tallit* chooses not only the colors and the design but also the inscription on the collar. A couple working on a *chuppah* learns about its origins and delves into Scriptures to find appropriate quotations to be embroidered on the *chuppah.* Says graphic artist Avrun Ashery, a veteran of the group, "We're not just a profit-making cooperative—we teach people what Jewish culture and Jewish ritual are about."

—Helen Mintz Belitsky

For more information about ArtSites, contact Shirley Waxman (301) 299-5526.

LETTERS

continued from page 3

Gemarah [Talmud], why should we fall into the trap of implying that women's sense of *tzedakah* [charity] is so different that they are only interested in supporting their "sisters," not their "whole families?" That somehow it excuses them from giving at the same levels to the total community as the men who have the *same income?*

After explaining the sociological and psychological reasons why women *have not yet* responded to these needs *in proportion to their own real capacities,* we have to challenge them to do so.

You acknowledge that "women aren't asked to give enough"—but they are usually asked by other women. By the way, I'm surprised at how many independent business women still allow themselves to be included under their husbands' gift accounts; even when it's "their own money" that is supporting the gift! To me, both these phenomena point to the fact that women need to grow and change their self-perceptions and self-expectations, perhaps more than the charitable organizations need to re-package their wares.

That federations have been trying to respond to the special psyche and behavior of today's women is attested to by the proliferation of "Business and Professional Women's Divisions" across the country. Why are women able to get to the top in the fields of medicine, law, and business, but continue to feel themselves unequal to competing with men in the field of *tzedakah*?

At UJA, we have created Women of Distinction, a program I staff, so that business and professional women with national stature can become the kind of philanthropic role models you note are sorely needed.

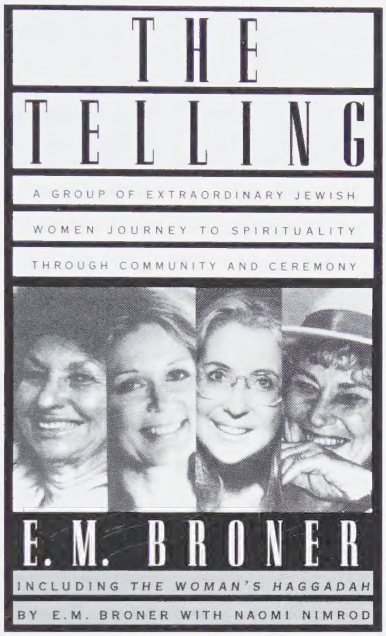
Our vision is a "fast track" program to get top notch women into positions of communal power, which we feel is a two-way deal:

1. UJA/Federations will benefit enormously from the addition of these women to our leadership ranks.

2. The women themselves will benefit greatly by appropriately acknowledging their own responsibility toward meeting the needs of the Jewish community. If they do, they will become true members of the leadership team. No one can give them that responsibility, only they can take it.

JUDY ADLER SHEER
New York, NY

"I discovered for the first time the purpose of ritual." —Gloria Steinem


THE TELLING
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INCLUDING THE WOMAN'S HAGGADAH
BY E.M. BRONER WITH NAOMI NIMROD

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TSENA RENA

WHERE TO GO FOR WHAT IF YOU'RE JEWISH AND FEMALE

CONNECTIONS

Across Boundaries: A History of Jewish Women in America, a conference to take place at the University of Maryland at College Park, October 31 to November 1, will explore the ways American Jewish women have functioned historically in their families and in the American and Jewish communities. Information: *Professor Hasia Diner, Dept. of American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742 (301)405-1357.*

Remarriage and Stepparenting in the Jewish Community, by Nathalie Friedman, explores what Jewish culture, ritual and tradition can offer remarried families—the resolution of religious differences between parent and stepparent or between parent and ex-spouse, how to make decisions about religious observance, and the opportunities in Jewish observance to develop new family rituals for a sense of common identity. $5.00. *William Petschek National Jewish Family Center, American Jewish Committee, 165 E. 56th St., New York, NY 10021.*

The Israeli Corner of the American Jewish Community, a report by Sherry Rosen, considers the role Israelis play in the education of American Jewish children, offers insight into how Israelis approach our common task of transmitting Jewish identity to the next generation, and suggests ways to involve American Israelis in the Jewish community. $3.00. *Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, Issues Series #3. From AJC, address above.*

Videos combat bigotry and challenge stereotypes. "Anti-Semitism on the College Campus," "Names Can Really Hurt Us," and "Rapmattazz: A Notebook Against Prejudice," are among others listed in the AV Catalog of *Anti-Defamation League, Materials Resource Center, 823 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 (212)490-2525.*

Are there roads still untaken that beckon to you? Anyone over age 60 may enter an essay contest administered by the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged, by July 31. Details: *Legacies II, 40 W.68 St., New York, NY 10023 (212)724-3200.*

DEAR GOD: THANK YOU FOR MY ANGER

This modest, moving, deeply thougtful 11-page booklet from Rabbi Nancy Flam of the Jewish Healing Center is the kind of mindful resource that people struggling with serious illness often appreciate. The booklet, "When The Body Hurts The Soul Still Longs To Sing," can also be used as a text in study groups concerned with the idea of prayer in general. The pamphlet consists mosly of 47 short, stunningly varied prayers written by contemporary women, both ill and not. The gift that this little book means to give us, I think, is the idea that sometimes one just has to write one's own prayer in order to get it right. Here is one woman's discerning effort:

I thank you God for the memory of those functions I enjoyed (and was so blessed to take for granted) for so many years, and for the ability to feel and to express my anger and my grief over losing what for so many years I understood to be an integral part of my essence. With my very essence with my breath I say, "Elohai, neshama shenatata bi tehorah hi." ["My God, the soul which You have given me is pure".*] Amen.*

Also put out by the Jewish Healing Center is a tiny laminated prayer card (3x5") for Jewish healthcare professionals. One side of the card holds the traditional prayer for healing; the other side offers the prayer to be said at someone's death.

Booklet, $4.00; laminated card, $1.75. Quantity discounts. *Jewish Healing Center/The Shefa Fund, 141 Alton Avenue, San Franciscio, CA 94116, (415)387-4999.* (CA residents add sales tax.)

—Susan Schnur

COLLECTIONS

Fireweed, A Feminist Quarterly: Jewish Women, #35, the first collection of Jewish feminist writing in Canada, has 127 pages of poems, photo essays, memoirs, reviews, and politics. $7.00. *Fireweed, P.O. Box 279 Station B, Toronto, ON Canada M5T 2W2.*

Jewish Lesbian & Gay Archive seeks information or material in for a bibliography resource guide. Submit also for an anthology of Jewish lesbian & gay fiction. *John Abush, 1407-50 Alexander St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1B6.*

Israeli Lesbian Oral History Project (in English) seeks volunteer transcribers of taped interviews and editors of completed histories. *Tracy Moore, 679 Vanderbilt Ave., #2R, Brooklyn, NY 11238.*

Jewish Perspectives on Multiculturalism. For an anthology that explores the role, importance and even the danger of multiculuralism to the Jewish community, send articles, bibliographies, curricula, reports of controversies, film resources, interviews, roundtable exchanges, sermons, poetry, suggestions, guidelines *to Marla Brettschneider: (through 7/1/31) Politics Dept., New York University, 715 Broadway, 4th Fl., New York, NY 10003; (after 8/1/93) Political Science Dept., Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA 17815.*

Nevek Shaymot, Names of Jewish victims of Hungarian Labor Battalions brings information to the general public and combats revisionist historians. To obtain information about individuals listed in this volume, or a bibliography of *yizkor* [memorial] books written for cities and areas in greater Hungary, contact *Louis Schonfeld P.O. Box 34152, Cleveland, OH 44134-0852, (216)-661-3970, FAX (216) 741-7329.*

RITUAL

Tefillin for women too. *Tefillin: "And You Shall Bind Them..."* is a book for pre-Bat and Bar Mitzvah youngsters telling about two small leather cases, containing passages from the Bible,

worn on the forehead and one arm during weekday morning prayers. Traditionally worn only by men, exceptional Jewish women throughout history have also worn them, and today many egalitarian-minded women take this obligation on themselves as well. 50 pages of stories and instructions. $5.95, United Synagogue Book Service, 155 5th Ave., New York, NY 10010.

Siddur Birkat Shalom is a work in progress in which prayers have been adapted for egalitarian God-and-people-language in Hebrew and English. Working towards completion of the entire Shabbat morning service. (See review, LILITH, Vol. 17 #4, Fall '92.) $10.00, *Siddur Project, Havurat Shalom, 113 College Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144.*

Glorious Crowns are head coverings (*kippot*) designed for women by artist Sara Harwin who also creates wedding canopies and Torah mantles.

Harwin Studios, 9101 SW 15th Ave., Portland, OR 97219.

SUMMER OPTIONS

Living Waters is a Jewish renewal retreat in a setting by the sea, a spiritual health spa integrating mystical Judaism and ancient rituals with modern egalitarian interpretations, under the guidance of Rabbi Shoni Labowitz. Initially June 11-13. *Temple Adath Or/ Living Waters, 11460 SW 16th St., Davie FL 33325 (305) 476-7466, FAX (305) 472-6533.*

The Complete Guide to Israel Programs is a comprehensive listing for young American Jews, with content, price, dates and ages. *American Zionist Youth Foundation, 110 E. 59th St., New York, NY 10022-1373. 1-800-27-ISRAE(L).*

Pedal for Progress: An all-women route focusing on women and AIDS will be one section of an annual transcontinental bicycle trek leaving Portland, OR on June 16, arriving in Washington, DC on August 20. To ride, host or meet the group this summer, contact *BIKE AID, 333 Valencia St., #330, San Francisco, CA 94103 (415) 431-4480.*

Children of the Holocaust who hid in attics, orphanages, woods, sewers, convents, hospitals, with Christian families, under false identity papers, or who survived the concentration camps, are invited with their guests to join the Hidden Child Foundation/ Anti-Defamation League, for the Second International Gathering in Jerusalem, July 12-15. *HCF ADL, 823 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 (212) 490-2525.*

Buffalo on the Roof. What? A week-long celebration of Yiddish/Klezmer and other Eastern European music, dance and folklore, August 11-17 at Buffalo Gap Camp for Cultural Arts in Capon Ridge, West Virginia. *MFAC, P.O. Box 5085, Lansing MI 48901-5085; Judy Barlas (517) 484-3619, or Michael Alpert (212) 666-5028.*

Israeli folkdance enthusiasts can keep up with what's afoot in Israel, the US and around the world by reading *NIRKODA*, published three times a year. Subscriptions include bimonthly special events calendars. $10.00, *Israeli Dance Institute, JCRC, 12th Fl., 711 3rd Ave, New York NY 10017 (212) 983-4806, x144.*

Alumnae of Jewish summer camps, here are reunions: Schwayder Camp of Congregation Emanuel , Denver CO, contact *Sharon Marks Elfenbein, 170 Lafayette, Denver, CO 80218, or (303) 722-8162.* Herzl Camp in northwestern Wisconsin, contact *Amy or Steve Herzl Camp, 4517 Minnetonka Blvd. #206, St. Louis Park, MN 55416, (612) 927-4002,* Camp Wise of the Jewish Community Center of Cleveland, *26001 South Woodland Rd., Beachwood, OH 44122 (216) 831-0700, x350.*

TO YOUR HEALTH

Breast Calcifications is a special bulletin about the often poorly explained finding of mammography. SASE. *Women's Cancer Resource Center, 3023 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705 (510) 548-9286.*

Jewish Women and Nursing: An Overview of Early History, by Evelyn R. Benson and Janice Selekman, begins to fill a gap in nursing history. Reprints from December 1992, Volume 23, Number 4, *The Journal of the New York State Nurses Assn., 2113 Western Ave., Guilderland, NY 12084-9501.*

Courtesy of Hadassah National Public Affairs

1913. Rose Kaplan and Rachel Landy, among the first American nurses sent by Hadassah to its original welfare station in Jerusalem.

Women's Health Now: A Woman's Health Is in Her Own Hands, is a monthly newsletter with facts and news. Yearly subscriptions, $18.00. *Troy Publishing, 233 Harvard St., #101, Brookline, MA 02146 (617)277-7780.*

Positive Living, a booklet about HIV, tells how to get support, medical information and care, and how to protect yourself and others. "HIV Negative: When Are You free from HIV?" is also free. *American Social Health Association. P.O. Box 13827, Dept. R, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.*

The Healthy Heart Handbook for Women tells how to reduce the risk of heart disease and discusses birth control pills, alcohol, hormones, menopause, and aspirin. $4.75 *#017-043-00122-2, New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954.*

Women's Transit Authority, a local rape-prevention ride service, will celebrate 20 years of service to women by women with a booklet highlighting the experiences of hundreds of volunteers and thousands of riders. Write in your experience by August 31 (or start a service in your community). *Women's Transit Authority, 306 N. Brooks St., Madison, WI 53715.*

–compiled by Naomi Danis

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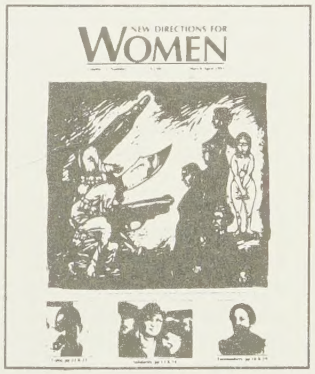

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Yahrzeit/May, 1990

by Susan Volchok

A flickering in the kitchen.
Of course.
What else did I expect?
Closed my eyes; must have slept.
Then—something.
(Nothing.)
Something
Like a ghostly telephone
rrringing in my head
as the heavy, black
night table phone had rung out,
three years ago,
three-thirty a.m.,
three paralyzing rings.

(If only I hadn't picked up,
whispered hello, thinking
what's the worst, what's the most
terrible...?
If only it had been
a wrong number:
Excuse me, but
my father is sleeping safe
beside my mother, in Queens.)

The worst the most terrible:
She hearing something herself,
brief struggle in the body,
or the ratcheting last breath,
and finding you dead there
in your sleep, in their bed,
Mother's Day morning.
And still disbelieving,
she dialed my number
listened to it ring
as I did
three long rings
before I dared to answer.

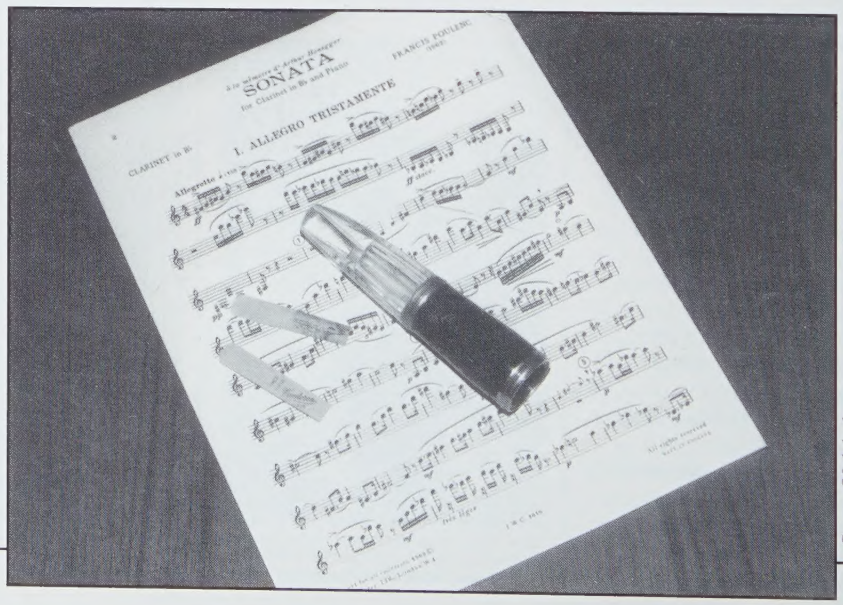
But now,
startled by another, more inward
alarm,
I'm instantly on my feet
in the dark bedroom,
ready for anything,
more than ready (I realize)
even to greet you,
to meet whatever the ceremony may
have summoned.
The candle flickers, flares,
as before.
The shadows on the walls,
mine among them,
are kitchen shadows,
nothing more.
This flame is likened to the soul.
But you aren't here; you're gone,
three years now, maybe this very
moment
in which I recall more moments
than my mind can hold.
The linoleum is ice against my bare
soles,
chilling me to the heart.
I wrap my hands around the crude
glowing glass,
something to hold onto, any light, heat.

To say I still miss you
aach
I have acknowledged;
I accept. I do. Daddy.
My life goes on.
Thoughts of you aren't so stabbing;
they're duller daily blows now.
But these anniversaries,
arbitrary, even artificial,
always seem to hold out,
then withhold, hope,
again, again and again.

Though I don't believe,
I lit the candle myself this year.
It will burn all day tomorrow
and into the next night.
Year's time:
Private rituals
realizing, surviving, loss.
I'll wear the silver wristwatch
you brought back for me
from one of your concert tours;
I'll make some notes with your silver
bar mitzvah pen.
Sometime during this day
a clarinet will certainly sing
somewhere else,
the perfect prayer,
made to our measure.
(After all,
you only murmured
Yis gadol
once, for Nanny.
And me, I've lost
my collection of crib cards
from Schwartz Brothers, Inc.)

So listen,
wherever you are,
listen:
Next year...
(l'shanah ha-ba'ah)...
Next year in the kitchen!
(As they say,
though usually in slightly
different words.)
Same day,
same time,
same hopeful hocus pocus:
How about it?
I'll be waiting,
candle bright.
against my darkness,
seeking your light

Susan Volchok's short fiction has been anthologized in *Word of Mouth 2* (Crossing Press); this fall her novella, *Sam's Girl*, is being released on audiotape.



Susan Volchok